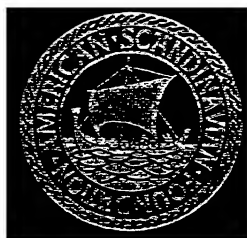


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SCANDINAVIAN CLASSICS
VOLUME XXIV



NORWEGIAN FAIRY TALES

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ESTABLISHED BY
NIELS POULSON



Drawing by Erik Werenskiöld

The sexton set off for the palace, dressed in the parson's ruff and cassock. The king was out on the porch to meet him, with crown and sceptre, and altogether he was so splendid that he shone

The Parson and the Sexton

NORWEGIAN FAIRY TALES

FROM THE COLLECTION OF
ASBJÖRNSSEN AND MOE

TRANSLATED BY
HELEN AND JOHN GADE



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To Mougzie
The friend of Larra-boy, Sarra-boy,
and Billy Bedford

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE middle of the nineteenth century the Norwegians were turning from foreign fashions in literature and seeking a form of expression that should be really their own. Naturally the eyes of poets and students had looked first of all to the sagas of the past both for subjects and style; but in 1841 the publication of a collection of Norwegian fairy tales bearing the names of Asbjørnsen and Moe revealed the fact that a native imaginative literature still existed among the peasantry, although it had not earlier been committed to writing. This volume was perhaps the greatest single event in the whole movement of that generation toward a more truly national culture. The compilers of these tales helped to free the Norwegian language from its long Danish bondage, while forming and popularizing in literature the speech of the common people. They gave a certain dignity to vernacular literature and revealed the poetry of popular tradition.

Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe both grew up in modest surroundings. They became fast friends while living in the home of a country pastor who prepared them for entrance to the university in Christiania. Neither hard

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work nor ill health ever crushed Moe's idealism; nor did debts and early failures affect the optimism and sunny boyish spirit of Asbjørnsen. Moe became a distinguished churchman and poet; Asbjørnsen, a popular writer who loved human nature and all outdoors. Both had open minds and hearts toward the thoughts and lives of the common people among whom they worked.

In collecting and preserving the tales which had been orally transmitted in remote country districts for generations, Asbjørnsen and Moe rendered the Norwegian language and literature a service similar to that performed by Herder and the Grimm brothers in Germany half a century earlier. The German fairy tales undoubtedly influenced Asbjørnsen, appealing to him by their simplicity of form as well as by their boldness and the happy endings of the stories; but his Norwegian temperament carried him beyond them in felicity of expression and frequently in lyric quality.

The stories which Asbjørnsen and Moe drew from the peasants were sometimes told when out hunting on still summer nights, sometimes by a superstitious milkmaid or a bedridden old woman; their setting might be the wild moor or the mysterious pine forest, majestic in its winter garb and always suggestive of wild, fantastic beings;

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or they might be evoked before the huge open fireplace, where the logs crackled and flamed on long winter evenings. They are full of the humor and the small homely details of peasant life, and bear the stamp of Norwegian imagination, while their origin dates back to the Dark Ages, or even, as in the case of Kari Wooden-skirt, to imperial Rome. The Old Norse gods come down in human form and associate with men, as they had done of old, but after the spread of Christianity in Norway in the Middle Ages Our Lord walks about the country with St. Peter.

The trolls of Asbjørnsen and Moe are derived from the fabled giants of Norse mythology, a race superior to men in size and strength, but far below the gods, and unable to resist the shining face of Balder the sun-god. The trolls are more malicious than the giants. They are very rich, stupid and gullible, so that men, having keener wits, generally get the better of them. The hill-people live underground or inside the mountains and come out on summer nights to sing sweetly. The *nisse* wears a red pointed cap and is full of mischievous pranks, but the cat often steals a march on him by lapping up the porridge with cream set out expressly for him behind the barn on Christmas night. The elves, hill-people, and *nisser*, as well as most of the other

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supernatural beings, are not nearly so old as the trolls. The number of legendary creatures in Norse folk-lore is truly astonishing. To the nymphs, brownies, kelpies, goblins, giants, mer-men, and mermaids, we may add other sprites living in the mountains, behind waterfalls, under treacherous waves, and in the mystery of the sighing forests. Many of these ancient superstitions have come down to our day, and it is not long since people believed that a child which disappeared in the woods had been enticed away by the *hulder* or hill-people, and that when any one was lost at sea the *draug* had taken him.

Some of these tales may be found in almost the same form in other countries. *The Twelve Wild Ducks* is almost identical with Grimm's *The Twelve Brothers*; *The Housemouse and the Fieldmouse* was told to Louis XIV by La Fontaine, and *East of the Sun and West of the Moon* is found in India. Parts of other stories are from the British Isles, others from the Netherlands, and many of them must have been brought to Scandinavia by early voyagers. Some have undergone considerable change in the Norwegian rendering, and many show traces of heathen beliefs. The hell of these stories is very like the Hel of Norse mythology where the porter has nine locks to close, one for each of the goddess

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Freya's nine worlds. This is the place that the medieval smith, who tricked the devil several times, tries to enter, considering it a not undesirable abode for one of his trade, and devil is not a torturing fiend, but rather a simple fellow, often outwitted in an unfair, ludicrous way.

This folk-lore is, like *Peer Gynt*, full of Norwegian mysticism, and is sometimes as difficult of translation as Ibsen's masterpiece. "The mountain that grows blue under the brow of heaven" is no translation of *bjerget som blaaner mot himmelbrynet*.

Asbjørnsen and Moe together first published a collection of *Eventyr*. Many years later Asbjørnsen alone compiled another collection of *Eventyr*, and later appeared his *Norske Huldre-eventyr og Folkesagn*. The *Eventyr* are imaginative tales invented by the people; the *Folkesagn* embody popular legends or still existing superstitions.

Among the tales I have selected those that seemed to me the best, disregarding the age of the readers as also the unity of the collection. They are not primarily, perhaps only selectively, for the very young. A few of them might be confusing to

"*The simple lessons by the nursery taught*"
that

"*Fell soft and stainless on the buds of thought.*"

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I have tried to group them according to their contents. Some are of the Uncle Remus type, with garrulous animals in hunting and fishing episodes, the story proper being interwoven; two are tales of fisherfolk and embody their superstitions; some are based on medieval legends; others are fairy tales pure and simple, and the last group is of a miscellaneous nature. It was difficult in a single volume to keep even within the wide margins of these classifications.

JOHN ALLYNE GADE

I

The Bear and the Fox

ONCE upon a time, the bear met the fox sneaking along the road with a string of fish which he had stolen.

"Where did you get those?" asked the bear.

"I've been out fishing, Mr. Bear," replied the fox.

Then the bear wanted to learn to fish too, and he begged the fox to teach him how.

"It's a simple matter for you," replied the fox, "and one that is quickly learnt. All you have to do is to go out on the ice, chop a hole, and stick your tail into it, and keep it there a good long while. You mustn't mind if it stings a little, for that's just the fish nibbling. The longer you can keep it there, the more fish you'll get. Then, suddenly, you must pull up your tail with a good hard jerk."

The bear did as the fox had told him and kept his tail down in the hole for a long, long time until it was frozen quite fast. Then he gave such a mighty tug that he pulled the tail clean off—and that is why he wanders about to this very day with only the little stump left.

The Bear and the Fox Bet on Pork and a Bees' Nest

ONCE upon a time there was a bear who came trudging across a swamp with a fat pig in his arms. Michael, the fox, was sitting high up on a boulder by the side of the swamp.

"How do you do, grandpa," said the fox, "what tidbit have you got there?"

"Pork," said the bear.

"I, too, have something that tastes pretty good," said the fox.



Drawing by Th. Kittelsen

"How do you do, grandpa?" said the fox, "what tidbit have you got there?" "Pork," said the bear

The Bear and the Fox

"What's that?" asked the bear.

"It's the biggest bees' nest I have ever found," said Michael.

"You don't say," said the bear, grinning and licking his chops at the thought of how delicious a little honey would taste. "Shall we swap?" he said.

"Not I," said Michael.

Finally they made a bet and agreed that each should name three kinds of trees. If the fox could say them faster than the bear, then he should get a bite of pork, but if the bear could say them faster, he was to have one suck of the nest. The bear thought he would be able to get all the honey in one suck.

"Yes," said the fox, "this may all be well and good, but I tell you that you must promise, in case I win, to tear the bristles off where I want to bite."

"Surely I'll help you, since you can't help yourself," said the bear.

So they were to name the trees.

"Spruce, fir, pine," growled the bear in a gruff voice. But this was just all one and the same tree.

"Ash, aspen, oak," shrieked the fox, so it rang through the woods.

Well then, he had won, and he jumped down

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from the boulder, took the heart of the pig out in one bite, and was going to run off. But the bear was angry that he had taken the very best part of the pig in one bite, and, grabbing him by the tail, held him fast.

"Wait a minute," said the bear, quite furious.

"We'll make it all right, grandpa," said the fox, "if you'll let me go, you shall have a taste of my honey."

When the bear heard that, he let go, and the fox held up the honey.

"I've put a leaf over the hole in the nest where you can suck," said the fox, as he pushed the nest up under the bear's nose and took away the leaf.

The fox jumped up on the boulder and began snickering and laughing, for there was neither honey nor bees' nest. It was a wasps' nest as big as a man's head, full of wasps, which swarmed out and stung the bear in his eyes and ears and mouth and snout. He was so busy trying to drive them off that he had no time to think of Michael.

Ever since that day the bear has been afraid of wasps.

The Housemouse and the Fieldmouse

ONCE upon a time there was a housemouse and a fieldmouse, and they met in the outskirts of a wood. There sat the fieldmouse in a hazel thicket, picking nuts.

"Busy harvesting, I see," said the housemouse; "I'm surprised to meet relations so far from home."

"I don't wonder at that," said the fieldmouse.

"You're harvesting nuts for your home stores?" asked the housemouse.

"I am obliged to if we are to have anything to live on this winter," said the fieldmouse.

"The husks are large, and the nuts are big this year, which will help fill empty stomachs," said the housemouse.

"Yes, you are right again," said the fieldmouse, and then described how well she lived and how fortunate she was.

The housemouse thought that she was better off, but the fieldmouse stuck to her text and said that nowhere was it so pleasant as in the woods or on the mountains, and she herself was best off. As they were unable to agree, they promised to visit each other at Christmas time, so that they could taste and see who really had the best of it.

The housemouse was the first to make the

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Christmas visit. Despite the fact that the fieldmouse had moved down for the winter, the housemouse was obliged to travel through woods and deep valleys where the roads were both long and heavy. The snow beat in her face and was thick and soft, and she was tired and hungry before the journey was over.

"Food *will* taste good, now," was her first thought on arrival.

The fieldmouse had scraped together quite a little. There were kernels of nuts and polypody as well as other roots, and many other good things from forest and field, and all this she had kept in a hole deep in the ground where it would not freeze, near a spring which was open all winter, so she could drink as much water as she liked. There was enough of what she had, but though they ate heartily and well, the housemouse thought, nevertheless, it was pretty poor pickings.

"You can keep body and soul together on this," she said, "but that's about all. Now you must be good enough to visit me and see how I fare."

The fieldmouse readily agreed, and it was not long before she came. The housemouse had by that time scraped together bits from all the Christmas fare the old woman of the house had spilled while she was tipsy during the holidays. There were cheese crumbs and bits of butter and

The Housemouse and the Fieldmouse

tallow and cream porridge and many other dainties. There was plenty to drink in the dripping-pan under the beer barrel. The whole room was really full of all kinds of goodies. They stuffed and lived high, and there seemed to be no filling the fieldmouse, for she had never tasted such fare. Finally, she grew thirsty, for the food was strong and rich and needed something to wash it down.

"It isn't far to the beer; let's drink," said the housemouse, jumping up on the edge of the dripping-pan in order to drink and quench her thirst.

She drank cautiously, however, for she knew that the Christmas beer was strong. But the fieldmouse found it so delicious (she had never tasted anything but water before) that she took one sip after another and was quite tipsy before she jumped down from the pan. First she grew muddled in her upper story, and then it went to her toes, so she began to run and jump from one barrel to another, to dance and tumble around on the shelves between cups and mugs and to screech as if she were both drunk and crazy. There was very little doubt as to her being drunk.

"You mustn't carry on as if you had just come from the backwoods to-day," said the house-

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mouse, "don't make such an awful racket. Our sheriff is very strict," she added.

The fieldmouse replied that she didn't care a hang for either sheriff or tramp.

But the cat, who sat slyly lurking near the cellar-door, had heard all the hustle and bustle, and just as the old woman opened the cellar-door to go down and tap the keg, the cat slipped by her into the cellar and struck her claws into the fieldmouse. That was quite another story! The housemouse scurried into her hole and sat in safety watching the fieldmouse, who grew sober enough when she felt the cat's claws.

"Oh, dear Mr. Sheriff, oh, dear Mr. Sheriff, please have pity and spare my life, and I will tell you a story," she said.

"Come on with it," said the cat.

"Once upon a time there were two little mice," said the fieldmouse, whimpering slowly and miserably, for she wanted to drag it out as long as she could.

"Then they were not lonely," said the cat, curtly and crossly.

"Then they had a steak they were going to fry."

"Then they didn't starve," said the cat.

"Then they put it out on the roof so as to cool it," said the fieldmouse.

The Housemouse and the Fieldmouse

"Then they didn't burn themselves," said the cat.

"Then the fox and crow came along and took it and ate it," said the fieldmouse.

"Then I'll eat you!" said the cat.

But at that very moment, the old woman banged the cellar-door so hard that it scared the cat, and she let go, and psst!—the fieldmouse was up in the hole beside the housemouse. From there a path led out into the snow, and the fieldmouse lost no time in starting for home. Before she left, she said:

"This you call living well, and you say you are best off? God give me less happiness instead of such a big place and such a master prowling around. Why, I hardly escaped with my life!"

The Ram and the Pig Who Went into the Woods to Live by Themselves

THERE was once a ram who was being fattened for killing, so he had plenty to eat and grew round and fat from all the good things they gave him. Every once in a while the dairy-maid came out and gave him more.

"Go ahead and eat, ram," she said, "you won't be here long, for we're going to kill you to-morrow."

There is an old saying that one shouldn't sneer at old women's advice, and "In good counsel and good drink there's help for everything except death," thought the ram, "so perhaps there's a way out of this pickle, too."

So he kept on stuffing till he could eat no more and bucked his way out into the neighbor's yard, where he made for the pig-sty to see a pig who had been a good friend of his ever since they had become acquainted out in the field.

"How do you do?" said the ram to the pig.

"How do you do?" replied the pig.

"Do you know why you're so well off and they fatten and pet you so much?" said the ram.

"No, no," said the pig.

"A thirsty horse drains his bucket fast," said the ram, "they want to kill you and eat you."

The Ram and the Pig

"Is that so?" said the pig, "I hope they will say grace before eating."

"If you're of my mind," said the ram, "then you'll go along to the woods, and we'll build a house and live by ourselves. There's nothing like having a home of your own."

The pig agreed, saying, "You're best off in good company," and off they started.

When they had gone a while, they met a goose.

"Hullo, good folks, how are you?" said the goose, "where are you bound for in such a hurry to-day?"

"How do you do?" said the ram, "we were much too well off at home, so we're going to the woods to live by ourselves. In your own home you are master."

"Well, I'm pretty well off where I live," said the goose, "but can't I join you? Friends and play shorten the day."

"You can't build house or hut by quacking and smacking," said the pig, "how could you be of use?"

"Counsel and skill are more than good will," said the goose. "I can pluck moss and stuff it into the cracks between the logs so the house is snug and warm."

Well, then they let her come along, for the pig liked it good and warm.

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When they had gone a bit farther—the goose couldn't go very fast—they met a hare scampering out of the woods.

"How do you do, good folks," said the hare, "how far are you trudging to-day?"

"How do you do?" said the ram, "we were quite too well kept at home, so we're off to the woods to build a home and live by ourselves. East—west, home's best."

"Well, as for me, every bush is my home, wherever I roam," said the hare, "but I've often said in the winter-time that if I lived till summer, I'd put up a house for myself, so I have really a mind to go along and build one at last."

"If we did get into a hole, it might be good to have you along to frighten the dogs," said the pig, "for, of course, you couldn't help us build the house."

"For all who are living, there is taking and giving," said the hare, "I have teeth which will sharpen the pegs and paws that can push them into the walls, so I'll make a pretty good carpenter. 'To do good work, you need good tools,' said the man when he skinned the mare with an auger."

So they thought they might as well let the hare come along and help build the home, and they all started off together.

The Ram and the Pig

When they had gone a bit farther, they met a cock.

"How do you do, good folks," said the cock, "whither are you bound to-day?"

"How do you do?" said the ram, "we were too well cared for at home, so we are off to the woods to build a house and live by ourselves. Unless at home you bake, you'll waste both coal and cake."

"Well, as for me, I'm pretty well off at home," said the cock, "but it's better to feather your own nest than on another's branch to rest. I want to be cock of my own roost. If I might join such fine company, I'd like to go with you to the woods and build a house."

"For all you flap and crow, you don't keep off the axe's blow, nor do strutting and laughter help raise the rafter," said the pig. "You can't help us build the house."

"The lodge something lacks without cocks or packs," said the cock. "I am early to rise and early to crow."

"Yes, early to rise makes a man wealthy and wise, so we had better let him come along," said the pig, who was always the worst sleepyhead. "Sleep is the thief who every day stealeth half your time away," he added.

So they all started together for the woods to

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build the house. The pig cut the lumber, and the ram drove it home; the hare was the carpenter, sharpened the pegs and hammered the roof and the walls; the goose plucked moss and stuffed it into the cracks; the cock crowed and saw that they did not oversleep in the morning. When the house was finished and the roof covered with bark and sod, they lived by themselves, comfortable and happy.

But a little farther off in the woods, two wolves had their lair. When they saw a new house in the neighborhood, they wanted to know what the newcomers were like, for they thought that a good neighbor is better than a far-away brother, and it is better in a friendly neighborhood to bide, than folks to know both far and wide.

So one of them thought of a pretext and went in to beg a light for his pipe. The moment he came inside the door, the ram bucked him so that he fell head-first into the fireplace, the pig kicked and bit, the goose hissed and pinched, the cock crowed and flapped up on the roost, and the hare was so scared that he leaped high and low and jumped and thumped into every corner.

After a long while, the wolf managed to get out.

"I suppose good neighbors make good friends," said the other wolf who was waiting outside. "You

The Ram and the Pig

must have found paradise out in the wilds, you were away so long. But how about your light? I can't see either pipe or smoke."

"Yes, that was a fine light and a fine company," said he who had been inside. "I've never seen such manners before. As you make your bed, you must lie in it, and an unexpected guest gets strange fare," said the wolf. "When I got inside the door, the shoemaker struck me with his last, so I fell head-first into the forge. There sat two smiths, blowing their bellows and pinching bits of flesh right out of me with red-hot tongs and pincers. The hunter rushed around looking for his gun, but as good luck would have it, he didn't find it. And some one sat up under the ceiling, flapping and crowing: 'Put the hook into him! Drag him over here, drag him over here!' If he'd gotten hold of me, I'd never have come out alive."

The Fox as a Shepherd

THERE was once a woman who started out to hire a shepherd.

First of all she met a bear.

"Where are you bound?" asked the bear.

"Oh, I'm going to hire a shepherd," answered the woman.

"Why don't you take me?" asked the bear.

"Well, if you only knew how to call the creatures," said the woman, "why then—"

"U-r-r!" growled the bear.

"No, indeed, I don't want you," said the woman, when she heard the bear, and she trudged on.

After a little while, she met a wolf.

"Where are you going?" asked the wolf.

"I'm going to hire a shepherd," answered the woman.

"How would I do?" asked the wolf.

"Well, if you only knew how to call the animals, why—" said the woman.

"Ou-u-u!" howled the wolf.

"No, I don't want you," said the woman.

After she had gone a little farther, she met a fox.

"Whither are you bound?" asked the fox.

"Oh, I'm going to hire a shepherd," answered the woman.

The Fox as a Shepherd

"Won't you take me for a shepherd?" asked the fox.

"Well, if you only knew how to call the animals, why then—" said the woman.

"Dilly-dally-high-diddle-dally," sang the fox in a high sweet voice.

"Yes, you're just the right one for a shepherd," said the woman, so she set him to guard all her live stock.

The first day he was shepherd, he ate up all the woman's goats; the next day he finished off all her sheep; and on the third day, he ate up all the cattle.

When he came home in the evening, the woman asked him what he had done with her stock.

"Their skulls are in the stream and their bones in the woods," said the fox.

The woman was very busy churning, but still she felt she must run out and see what had become of all her animals. While she was off hunting for them, the fox slipped into the churn and licked up all the cream. When she came back and saw what had happened, she was so angry that she took the drop of cream that was left and threw it after the fox, hitting him on the end of his tail. And that is why, to this very day, the fox has a white tuft on the end of his tail.

II

The Tufte-people on Sandflæsen

FAR out to sea, on a line with Trænen on Helgeland, lies a small bar called Sandflæsen. It is a tip-top fishing place but hard to find, as it shifts its position from time to time. Whoever is so lucky as to hit upon it is sure of a good catch. If he leans far out over the sheer strake when the water is clear and still, he will see at the bottom of the sea a narrow gully like the track made by the keel of a Nordland boat and within it something like a craggy mountain top.

This bar has not always been at the bottom of the sea. In olden days it was an island owned by a rich Helgeland farmer as a refuge in bad weather during the summer fishery, and there he had built a fisherman's shanty which was larger and better than most of such huts. Even now there are those who believe that Sandflæsen sometimes rises from the bottom of the sea and is seen as a lovely island.

I cannot vouch for the truth of that, but in ancient times, when it actually *was* there, strange things happened on its lonely shores. Fishermen and seafarers claimed that when they sailed by they heard the sound of laughter and music and dancing, as well as hammering and other noises and the "heave-ho" of fishermen hauling up

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their boats. So they gave it a wide berth. But no one ever told of having seen a living soul on Sandflaesen.

Now there was a rich peasant who had two sons, one named John-Nicholas and the other, Lucky-Andy. John-Nicholas, who was the elder of the two, was hard to understand. He was a difficult fellow to get on with and thriftier than most people from Nordland, and that is saying a good deal. Lucky-Andy was a wild one, good-natured withal, and he boasted that no matter how tight a hole he was in, his good luck always pulled him out. If he was out robbing eagles' nests, the mother bird might scratch his face till the blood ran, but he did not mind if he only brought home a young one. His boat might capsize—indeed, this happened quite often—and he be picked up sitting on the keel wet to the skin and stiff with cold, but when they asked him how he felt, he would answer:

"Oh, pretty fair. I'm saved, and my luck still holds!"

They were both grown-up when their father died. Shortly after, they were bound one day for Sandflaesen to fetch some nets and tackle left behind there after the summer fishing, and, as usual, Lucky-Andy took his gun along. It was later in the autumn than most fishermen ventured so far

The Tufte-people on Sandflæsen

out to sea. During the sail out, John-Nicholas did not say much, but he did all the more thinking. It was growing dark before they were ready to turn back.

"See here, Lucky-Andy," said John-Nicholas, looking out over the ocean, "we're going to have dirty weather to-night, and I think it's best to stay here and wait till to-morrow."

"No, we shan't have any dirty weather," said Lucky-Andy, "for the Seven Sisters have not got their fog caps on. Let her rip!"

But John-Nicholas complained that he was tired, and finally they agreed to stay there over night. When Andy woke up, he found himself alone, and he could see neither his brother nor the boat until he came up on the peak of the island; then he saw it far away flying like a gull for the opposite shore.

Lucky-Andy could not make head or tail of this. A provision box was left him, an anchor with its cross-piece, his gun, and a few odds and ends.

But Andy was not the fellow to worry long about anything. "I suppose he'll be back by supper-time," he said to himself, as he sat down to eat; "only a fool loses courage as long as he has some food left."

Night came on, but no brother. Lucky-Andy waited day after day and week after week. At

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last he understood that his brother had left him on the little desert island so that he could get the whole inheritance after their father. This was quite true, for when John-Nicholas came near shore, he purposely capsized and then said that Lucky-Andy had gone down with the boat.

But even then Lucky-Andy did not lose courage. He gathered drift-wood on the beach, shot sea-fowl, and gathered angelica root and shell-fish. Then he made a raft of boards and fished with a coal-fish pole which had been left behind.

One day when he was busy in this way, he noticed a channel in the sand like the track made by the keel of a big Nordland fishing boat. He also saw clearly the marks of ropes running from the water's edge up to the little rocky knoll. Then he felt sure there was nothing for him to worry about, for he saw that the Tufte-people* really came there, as he had often heard, and did lots of fishing.

"God be praised for good company, for that it surely is. I'm certainly right when I say I always have good luck!" thought Lucky-Andy; perhaps he said so, too, for he needed to talk out loud sometimes.

Autumn passed with little or no change. Once he saw a boat and signaled to it with a piece of his

* The hill-people.

The Tufte-people on Sandflæsen

clothing fastened to a pole. But no sooner did those in the boat see it than they lowered their sail, took to the oars, and began pulling in the opposite direction with all their might and main. They thought it was the Tufte-people who were waving and beckoning to them.

On Christmas Eve Lucky-Andy heard strains of music and fiddles far out to sea. When he went out to see what it could be, he caught sight of a big Nordland boat gliding towards the shore. He had never seen the like of it with its big square sail that shimmered like silk and the lightest ropes, not thicker than wire threads, and all the rigging and everything just as fine and elegant as any Nordland fisherman could desire.

The vessel was full of small people in blue clothes, and a girl sat at the tiller, dressed like a bride and looking like a queen with a crown on her head and in the most marvelous attire. Lucky-Andy could see that she was a human being, for she was far too big and handsome to be one of the little people. Indeed, he thought he had never seen such a lovely girl in all his life before.

The boat steered for the shore just where Lucky-Andy was standing, so, collecting his wits, he hurried into the fishing shack, grabbed his gun from the wall, and crept high up upon a big

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shelf where he could see what was going on inside without being seen.

In a little while he saw the Tufte-people come swarming into the shack till it was crammed full,—but still they came. Then the walls began to creak and the room to spread out on all sides, and the furnishings were more splendid than in any rich merchant's house. It was like a room in the king's palace. The little people laid the table with dishes and cups and plates of silver and gold and the richest food.

When they had finished eating, they began to dance. While this was going on, Lucky-Andy crept out on one of the roof beams, jumped down, and rushed to the boat. He threw his gun in after cutting a cross in it for safety's sake.

When he returned, the dance was in full swing. The tables danced and the benches and chairs and everything in the room. The bride was the only one who was not dancing. She just sat and looked on and pushed the bridegroom away whenever he wanted her to stand up. Everything else was going full tilt. The fiddler played without ever stopping to catch his breath; back and forth went his bow, and up and down went his foot, beating time till the sweat poured off him, and he could not see his fiddle for the dust and dirt.

The Tufte-people on Sandflæsen

When Lucky-Andy felt his own feet beginning to twitch, he said to himself:

"I guess I'd better bang away, or he'll be playing me away from house and home."

He poked the end of his gun in through the window, tipping the barrel up so as not to hit himself, and pulled the trigger right over the bride's head. The moment the shot went off, all the Tufte-people rushed pell-mell out of the door, one on top of the other. They were in a terrible state when they saw their boat was tied, and hurried into a hole in the rock. All the gold and silver service was left behind, and the bride sat there, too, looking as if she had just come out of a trance.

Then she told Lucky-Andy how she had been stolen when she was a little child. One day her mother had gone out to milk the cows in the pasture and had taken her along. Her mother had to run home on an errand and left her sitting in the heather under a juniper tree, telling her that she might eat the berries if she would first repeat three times:

*Juniper berries blue I eat,
The Cross of Christ upon their meat.
I also eat the cranberry red,
And think upon the Saviour dead.*

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After her mother had gone, she found so many berries that she forgot to repeat the verse, and so the little folk had come and carried her off into the mountain. In all her long stay with the Tufte-people, no harm had been done to her except that she had lost the last joint on one of her little fingers; otherwise they had been good and kind to her. But things were not right; she could not help worrying, and the Tufte fellow who was bent on marrying her gave her no peace early or late.

As soon as Lucky-Andy heard who her mother was and where she came from, he knew they were relations, and they soon became friends.

Lucky-Andy told her banteringly what a lucky fellow he was, and then they sailed home in the boat, taking along the gold and silver and precious things which the Tufte-people had left behind in the fishing shack. All this made Andy much richer than his brother.

When John-Nicholas saw all these riches, he did not like to be any less well off himself, and he had his own opinion as to where it had all come from. He knew that trolls and Tufte-people were generally up and doing on Christmas Eve, so he put off for Sandflæsen just before the holidays. And sure enough, on Christmas Eve he saw lights and a fire, but it looked rather like the phosphorescence of the sea. As it came nearer, he heard

The Tufte-people on Sandflæsen

splashing in the water and horrible howls and blood-curdling shrieks, and there was an awful stench of burning feathers. In his fright he ran up the beach and into the fishing shack and watched the bogy-men come ashore. They were stubby and round like haystacks. All were dressed in skins and wore mittens on their hands and had on large sea-boots. The mittens were so big, they hung down and fairly touched the ground. Instead of heads with hair on them, they had just bunches of seaweed. As they scrambled ashore, they left streaks of light behind them as bright as birch-wood flames, and when they shook themselves, sparks flew all about them.

John-Nicholas crept up on the shelf just as his brother had done. The bogies brought with them big stones with which they tried to pound the ice out of their mittens. Every now and then they gave shrieks which made John-Nicholas's blood run cold, as he lay up there on the shelf. At last he tried to peep out through the window to get his breath and some fresh air, but, as he was stouter than his brother, he stuck in the window frame and could neither get in nor out. Then he was frightened and began to scream, but the bogies shrieked even louder, and they howled and carried on and jumped and thumped in and outside the shack.

As soon as the cock crowed they vanished, and

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then John-Nicholas managed to free himself, too. He was crazy when he reached home, and after that the people often heard out in the barns or up in the attic the same blood-curdling shriek which in Nordland they say the boggy-man makes. He got his senses back before he died, however, and was buried in holy ground.

Since that time, not a soul has set foot on Sandflæsen. The island sank, and they say that the Tufte-people moved to the Likang Islands. Fortune continued to smile on Lucky-Andy. No boat brought in so many good fish as his. Whenever he sailed by the Likang Islands, everything was very quiet, for the Tufte-people had either sailed off in their boats or gone inland with their goods. Andy always got a fair wind, whether he was on the way to Bergen or homeward bound. He had many children, and all of them were strong and healthy, but they all lacked the last joint on the little finger of the left hand.

The Ut-Röst Cormorants

ON VARÖ close to Röst there lived, once upon a time, a poor fisherman named Isaac. He owned nothing in the world but a boat and a couple of goats which his wife kept alive with scraps of fish and the few spears of grass which they could cut up on the mountain-side. And yet, though Isaac's cabin was full of hungry youngsters, he was quite content with what the Lord had ordered for him and complained only because of a neighbor who gave him no peace. The neighbor was a rich man who thought that he ought to be much better off than such a beggar as Isaac, and he wanted to get rid of him in order to have for himself the landing-place in front of Isaac's hut.

One day Isaac was out fishing a couple of miles from shore when a thick fog came up, and then suddenly such a storm that he had to throw all his fish overboard to lighten the boat and keep it from capsizing. Even then it was not easy to keep her afloat, but he just managed to steer through and over the great waves which every minute threatened to sink him. He had been driving on in this way for five or six hours when he thought he must soon be nearing land. But just then the fog grew thicker, and the storm

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raged worse and worse, so as he sailed and sailed with never land in sight, it dawned on him that he must be driving straight out to sea, or else that the wind had veered. Suddenly, just beyond the bow, he heard a frightful shriek, and then he felt certain it was the water kelpy singing a dirge for him, so he prayed to God for his wife and children, so sure was he that his last hour had come. As he sat praying with all his might, he caught a glimpse of something black, but coming nearer, he saw it was only three cormorants sitting on a piece of driftwood, and whisk! he had passed them by.

So he drove on for a long, long time, and he grew so hungry and thirsty and tired that he did not know for the life of him what to do, and almost fell asleep, still holding on to the tiller, when suddenly the keel scraped bottom, and the boat ran aground! You may be sure Isaac was wide awake in a jiffy, and as the sun broke through the fog, he saw a beautiful country-side fresh after the storm. The slopes of the hills and mountains were covered with green fields and fertile meadows up to their very crests. He could smell the young grass and flowers, and it seemed to him, as he drew deep breaths of the fragrant air, that the whole country-side was lovelier than anything he had ever seen in all his lifelong days.

The Ut-Röst Cormorants

"God be praised, now I'm saved," said Isaac to himself, "for this is Ut-Röst.*"

Right in front of him stretched a field of barley, the ears so big and full that he had never seen the like before. A little path led through the barley to a hut thatched with green turf, and on top there grazed a white goat with gilded horns and udders as big as a cow's. On a bench outside the hut sat a little man dressed in blue, puffing at his pipe. His beard was so long, it reached way down over his chest.

"Welcome to Ut-Röst, Isaac," said the old man.

"Well met, father!" answered Isaac, "but do you know me?"

"Yes, indeed, I do!" replied the old man, "I suppose you want lodgings here for the night."

"Yes, if I am lucky enough," said Isaac, "whatever you have is the best in the world for me."

"There might be trouble with my boys," said the old man, "they can't stand the smell of human flesh. Haven't you met them?"

"No, I've seen no one but three cormorants perched on a piece of driftwood, screaming," answered Isaac.

* Ut-Röst is one of the fabled islands in northern waters. There the hill-people live and carry on their farming and fishing. The island shows itself only to good people and only when they are in danger of their lives. It is noted for its fertile fields and green pastures.

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"Well," said the old man, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "those were my boys. Now you had better go inside, for I'm sure you must be both hungry and thirsty."

"I'm much obliged to you," said Isaac.

But when the old man opened the door, what Isaac saw was so wonderful that his eyes almost popped out of his head. He had never seen anything like it before. The table was laden with bowls of milk and cream and haddock and reindeer steak and liver-cakes covered with syrup and cheese. There was pastry from Bergen, and whiskey and beer and mead and everything else that is good.

Isaac ate and drank all he could, but somehow his plate was never empty, and his glass was always full. The old man did not eat much, nor did he say much either. All of a sudden they heard a scream and a rumbling outside, and the old man went out. After a while, he came back with his three sons. They were dark, stumpy fellows, and Isaac started a little as he saw them in the doorway, but the old man had probably calmed them down, for they seemed rather pleasant and good-natured, though they said to Isaac, who had finished and got up to leave the table, that he must have table-manners, keep his seat, and drink with them. So Isaac humored them and stayed, and

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they all drank dram after dram of whiskey, with now and then a swallow of beer or mead. Finally they became very good friends, and the boys said they would all have to go fishing together, so that Isaac would have something to take home with him.

The first day they were out, a terrible storm came up. One of the sons sat at the tiller, one in the bow, and one in the cock-pit, while Isaac had to bale so hard that the sweat poured off him. They sailed as if they were stark raving mad; they never reefed the sail, and when the boat was full of water, they just sailed her up on the crest of the waves till she tilted over, and the sea poured like a waterfall out of the cock-pit. After a while the storm abated, and they began to fish. Their catch piled up so high that they could not even find the iron ballast which was kept in the bottom of the boat. The Ut-Röst boys hauled in one fish after another. Isaac was using his own tackle and got many a good bite, but every time he had a fish just to the surface, it got away before he could pull it into the boat. When the boat was filled, they sailed home to Ut-Röst, and the boys cleaned the fish and hung them up to dry. Then Isaac complained of his own hard luck to the old father, who gave him a couple of hooks and promised him better luck with them.

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The next time they went out Isaac pulled in the fish as fast as the boys, and when they came back he had as his share three big lines full.

But Isaac grew homesick and decided to leave. Then the old man gave him a new eight-oared boat, filled with flour and sail-cloth and many other useful things. Isaac thanked him many times over, and the old man invited him to come back when the fishing season was on again and promised to take him to Bergen so that he could sell his fish at a good price.

Isaac was much pleased with this offer and asked the old man what course he should steer when he wanted to come back to Ut-Röst.

"Straight after the cormorant when it flies out to sea," said the old man, "then you'll be on the right course. Good luck!"

When Isaac had pushed from shore and looked around, Ut-Röst had disappeared, and he saw nothing but the great, wide ocean.

Isaac was on hand when the fishing season again came round. He had never seen such a wonderful boat as the old man's. It was so long that when the mate on watch in the bow shouted to the sailor at the oars, his voice could not carry so far, and another fellow had to stand between them by the mast and shout back at the top of his lungs.

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They put Isaac's share of the catch in the bow, but he could not understand how it was that, though he himself took the fish off the lines, there were always new ones there, and when he left off there were just as many as ever.

When he came to Bergen he sold his fish at such a high price that he was able to follow the old man's advice and buy a fine new boat, all fitted out complete. Late one night, just as Isaac was about to leave, the old man came aboard and begged him not to forget his neighbor's children. "He has been drowned," said the old man. Thereupon he wished Isaac all kinds of luck with his new boat.

"Everything will come out all right in the end," he said, which really meant that there was one on board whom no one saw, but who would steady the mast with his back when it came to a pinch.

Ever afterwards Isaac had good luck in everything he undertook, but he knew where it came from, and when he put up his boat in the fall, he never forgot the fellows who would be out on watch all winter. Every Christmas Eve his boat was all ablaze with lights, and one could hear the sound of fiddling and laughter and dancing in the cabin.

III

The Twelve Wild Ducks

ONCE upon a time there lived a queen who went out driving one winter's day just after a heavy snowstorm. After awhile she was taken with such nose-bleed that she had to get out of her sleigh. As she was standing by a hedge, looking down at the red blood and the white snow, she said to herself:

"If only I had a daughter who was as red as blood and as white as snow, I wouldn't care for my boys."

The words were scarcely out of her mouth when a witch appeared and said to her:

"You shall have a daughter as white as snow and as red as blood, and your sons shall belong to me, but you may keep them till the baby is christened."

And so it came to pass that the queen had a daughter.

The child was as white as snow and as red as blood, just as the witch had promised, and so they called her "Snow-White-and-Rose-Red."

There were great rejoicings in the palace, and as for the queen she went quite wild with joy, until she suddenly remembered what she had promised the witch. Thereupon she had the silversmith make twelve silver spoons, one for each prince, and

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one more besides which she gave to Snow-White-and-Rose-Red.

As soon as the princess was christened, the twelve princes were turned into twelve wild ducks which flew away and were seen no more. They were clean gone, and they never came back.

The princess grew up to be a tall and beautiful maiden, but she was often so strange and sad that no one could understand what was the matter with her.

At last one evening when the queen was also sorrowful—for, of course, she had many strange thoughts when she remembered her boys—she said to Snow-White-and-Rose-Red:

“Why are you so sad, my child? Tell me if anything is the matter with you. If there is anything you want, I’ll give it to you.”

“Oh, I think it’s so lonely here,” said Snow-White-and-Rose-Red. “Every one else has brothers and sisters, but I have none; I am all alone. That’s why I’m so sad.”

“You have had brothers, too, my child,” said the queen. “I have had twelve sons who were your brothers, but I gave them all up for you,” and then she told the whole story.

There was no more peace for the princess when she had heard this. For all the queen wept and wailed, she could not hold the princess. She was

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determined to go off and find her brothers, for all the fault was hers, she said.

In the end the princess had her way and left the palace. Off she went into the great wide world, so far that you never would have believed it possible for such a delicate girl.

One day when she had been walking a long while in a great, dense forest, she grew so tired that she sat down on a little mound of grass and fell asleep. She dreamt that she went on deeper into the forest until she came to a little log cabin, and there she found her brothers. Just then she awoke, and right in front of her she saw a well-worn path through the green moss, leading deeper into the wood. She jumped up and followed it, and after a long walk she came to just such a little log cabin as she had seen in her dream.

There was no one at home when she went in, but there were twelve beds and twelve chairs and twelve spoons and twelve of everything. When she saw this she was beside herself with joy, for she knew this must be where her brothers lived, and that the beds and the chairs and the spoons belonged to them.

And now she laid the fire and swept, made up the beds, cooked the food, and tidied up everything as best she knew how. As soon as the meal was ready, and she had laid the table for them,

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she had her own dinner, but her spoon she forgot, and it was left on the table.

Then she crept in under the youngest brother's bed and lay down.

No sooner was she there than she heard a whirring and flapping in the air, and all the twelve wild ducks came flying in. But the moment they crossed the threshold they turned into princes.

"Oh, how nice and warm it is in here!" they said. "God bless whoever laid the fire and cooked us such a good dinner." And each took up his silver spoon and sat down to eat. But when they saw there was still a spoon left on the table, they looked at each other in wonder.

"It's our sister's spoon!" they said, "and if her spoon is here, she can't be far away."

"If that's our sister's spoon, and she is here," said the eldest prince, "she ought to be killed, for she's the cause of all our sufferings." She heard it all from under the bed.

"No," said the youngest, "it would be a sin to kill her, for she's not to blame for all our sufferings. If it's any one's fault, it's our mother's."

So they began searching for her high and low, and finally they looked under all the beds. When they came to the youngest prince's bed, there they found her and dragged her out.

The eldest prince still wanted to kill her, but

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she cried and begged pitifully for her life, saying:

"Oh, please don't kill me. I've wandered about hunting for you for years, and I'd gladly give my life, if I could only save you."

"Well, if you'll save us, then you may live; for you could do it easily if you only wanted to."

"Oh, if you'll just tell me how," said the princess, "I'll do it, whatever it may be!"

"You must gather thistle-down," said the princes, "and then you must card and spin and weave it, and when you've done that, you must cut out and make from the cloth twelve caps, twelve shirts, and twelve handkerchiefs—one for each of us—but while you're doing it, you must not laugh, nor speak, nor cry. If you can do all that, then we're saved."

"But where shall I find enough thistle-down for so many caps and shirts and handkerchiefs?" asked Snow-White-and-Rose-Red.

"That we can easily show you," said the princes, and they took her out to a great meadow filled with thistle-down, waving in the wind and shimmering in the sun and looking like sparkling snow as far as you could see.

Never had the princess seen so much thistle-down, and she set to work at once to pick and pile it up as fast as she could, and in the evening, when



Drawing by Th. Kittelsen

Never had the princess seen so much thistle-down, and she set to work at once to pick it as fast as she could

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she got home, she carded and spun the thistle-down into yarn. She kept this up for a good, long while, picking and spinning and, in between times, cooking for them and making their beds. Every evening they came flapping and flying home as wild ducks; at night they were princes, but when morning came, away they flew and were wild ducks all day. Now it chanced one day when she was out picking thistle-down—and if I'm not mistaken it was the last time she needed any—that the young king who ruled the country was out hunting and caught sight of her as he was riding across the meadow. He stopped, wondering who the lovely maiden could be who was wandering about picking thistle-down. He asked her name and wondered all the more when she did not answer him. All the same he liked her so much that he wanted to take her back to the palace and marry her. So he told his servants to lift her up on his horse. Snow-White-and-Rose-Red wrung her hands in despair and made signs and pointed at the bags full of all her work. When the king finally understood that she wanted to take them along, he told his servants to pack them, too, on the horse. This done, the princess gradually quieted down, for the king was both kind and handsome and smiled at her sweetly.

When they reached the palace, and the king's

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old stepmother saw how beautiful Snow-White-and-Rose-Red was, she was so angry and jealous that she said to the king:

“Don’t you know that the girl you’ve brought home and want to marry is a witch? Why! she can’t speak nor laugh nor cry!”

The king paid no attention to the old stepmother, but married Snow-White-and-Rose-Red, and they lived in great happiness and grandeur, but for all that she never forgot to work on the shirts.

Before the year was over, the young queen had a little prince, and this made the old queen even more angry and jealous. So in the night she stole into Snow-White-and-Rose-Red’s bedroom, while she was asleep, took the child and threw it into the snake-pit. Then she came back and cut the young queen’s finger and smeared the blood on her mouth and went to the king.

“Now,” she said, “come and see what kind of a woman you have taken for your queen. She’s eaten her own child.”

The king was so heartbroken that he almost burst into tears, and said:

“I suppose it must be true from what I see with my own eyes, but I am sure she’ll never do it again, and I shall forgive her this time.”

The young queen had another son within the

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year, but everything happened just as it had with the first one. The king's stepmother was even angrier and more jealous than before, and again stole into the queen's bedroom at night, while she was asleep, took the child and threw it into the snake-pit, then cut the queen's finger, smeared the blood on her mouth, and went and told the king that the queen had eaten up this child, too.

This made the king more miserable than you can possibly imagine, and he said:

"From what I can see with my own eyes, I suppose it must be true, but I'll forgive her this time, too, for I'm sure she won't do it again."

Before the next year was over, Snow-White-and-Rose-Red had a daughter, and the old queen stole her, too, and threw her into the snake-pit. As before, she cut the queen's finger and smeared blood on her mouth while she was asleep, and then went to the king and said:

"Now come and see if I don't speak the truth when I say she's a witch, for now she has eaten up her third child, also."

There was now no measure to the king's grief, for now he could no longer spare her, but was obliged to give orders that she should be burned alive.

When the pyre was lighted, and they were about to throw her upon it, she made signs to the people

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to take twelve boards and place them around the fire, and she laid her brothers' handkerchiefs and shirts and caps on them—they were all finished except for the left sleeve of the youngest brother's shirt. No sooner was this done, than there was a whizzing and whirring in the air, and twelve wild ducks came flying from the forest. Each one took his clothes in his bill and flew away.

"Now you see," said the wicked old queen to the king, "that she really is a witch. Hurry and throw her on while the wood is still burning."

"Oh," said the king, "we have plenty of wood. There's a whole forest of it. Wait a minute—I must see the end of all this!"

Just at this minute the twelve princes came riding up, as tall, handsome fellows as you ever set eyes on, but the youngest had a duck's wing in place of his left arm.

"What are you doing?" asked the princes.

"My queen is to be burned because she's a witch and has eaten her own children," answered the king.

"She hasn't eaten her children," said the princes. "Speak up, sister! You have saved us, now save yourself!"

Then Snow-White-and-Rose-Red broke her silence and told them of all that had happened and how, every time a child was born, the old queen,

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the king's stepmother, had stolen into her bedroom at night and taken away her child and then cut her finger and smeared blood on her mouth.

Then the princes took the king to the snake-pit. There were the three children playing with the snakes and toads, and you have never laid your eyes on prettier children.

The king took them with him and went to his stepmother and asked her what punishment she thought should be given to any one who had the heart to betray an innocent queen and three such blessed children.

"Such a one should be tied to twelve wild horses and torn to pieces," said the old queen.

"You have pronounced your own doom," said the king, "and now you'll have to suffer it."

So the old queen was tied to twelve wild horses, who tore her to pieces.

But Snow-White-and-Rose-Red took the king and her children and the twelve princes home to her parents and told them all that had happened. There were great rejoicings over the whole kingdom, for not only had the princess returned safe and sound, but she had also saved her twelve brothers.

The Tobacco-Boy

THERE was once a poor woman who went about begging with her son. At home she had neither food nor fire. She went up and down the countryside, and then she came to the town. She went about there from house to house till she came at last to the burgomaster's. He was both open-hearted and open-handed, one of the city's best, and he was married to the daughter of the richest merchant there, and they had one little daughter. As they had no other children, she was the apple of their eye, and there was nothing that was too good for her. She soon knew the beggar boy well, as he came there with his mother, and when the burgomaster saw what good friends the two were, he took the boy into his house, so that the little girl might have him for a playmate. Well, they played together, arranged things together, studied together, and went to school together, and were always the best of friends.

One day the burgomaster's wife stood at the window watching the children as they were going to school. She saw that there was a puddle in the street and that the boy carried the box with the luncheon over the puddle; then he returned and lifted the little girl over, and when he put her down, he gave her a kiss.

The Tobacco-Boy

When the burgomaster's wife saw this, she grew angry: "Is such a ragamuffin to kiss our daughter, —we who are the first people in town?" she said.

The husband did his best to pacify her and said no one ever knew where his own children might live, or what might happen to himself. The boy was a kind, decent fellow, and little shoots often grew into big trees. But no, it didn't matter what the boy was or might become. When poverty comes to honor, it doesn't know how to take it, and what's minted as a penny never turns into a dollar, even if it glitters like a gold piece. The burgomaster's wife added that she would not have him there any longer; she was going to get rid of him. When the burgomaster saw there was nothing else to be done, he sent the boy away with a merchant who had come to town with a ship and who was willing to take him as cabin-boy. He told his wife he had sold the boy for tobacco.

Before he left, the burgomaster's little daughter took off her ring and broke it into two pieces and gave one to the boy, so they might know each other if they ever met again. The ship sailed, and the boy finally came to a city far, far away. There a parson had just come who was such a good preacher that everybody went to church to hear him, so when Sunday came round, the ship's crew

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also went to hear the sermon. The boy was left all alone on the boat. While he was getting dinner ready, he heard some one calling across the water from the opposite shore. So he took the rowboat and crossed to where he saw an old hag calling. "I've stood here calling and bawling for more than a hundred years," she said, "and thought I was never going to get across. No one has heard or heeded me except you, and now I'm going to reward you for setting me over on this side," she said. So the boy had to go with her to her sister, who lived up on a near-by mountain, for there he was to beg for an old tablecloth he would see lying on the cupboard shelf. Yes, when they arrived and the old witch heard that he had ferried her sister across the water, she said he might have whatever he wished. "Oh," said the boy, "I only want the old tablecloth up on the shelf."

"You didn't think of that yourself," said the old witch.

"I must get back to the ship," said the boy, "and cook the Sunday dinner for the church-goers."

"Never mind that," said the old woman, "it will cook itself while you're away. Just stay with me, and I'll give you more pay. I've stood and called and bawled across the water for a hundred years, but no one ever heeded or heard me before."

The Tobacco-Boy

So he was to go along with her to another sister, and there he was to beg for an old sword, which was of a kind that turned into a knife when he put it in his pocket, and when he pulled it out, there it was a long sword again! Whatever he struck with the black edge dropped dead, and anything he struck with the white one came to life again.

So when they came there, and the second old witch heard that he had ferried her sister across the water, she, too, thought he ought to be paid for it, and said he could have anything he wanted. "Oh," said the boy, "all I want is the old sword lying there on top of the cupboard."

"You didn't think of that yourself," said the witch.

Then the old hag said once more, "Come along with me. I stood calling and bawling across the water for over a hundred years. No one except you heard or heeded me. Come along with me to my third sister, and you shall get even more pay." There she told him to beg for the old hymnal which was of such a kind that when one sang the right hymns from it to a sick person, the sickness left him, and he was cured. Well, when they at last arrived, and the third witch heard how he had ferried her sister over the water, she, too, wanted to pay him, and he might have whatever he wanted.

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"Oh," said the boy, "I only want your granny's old hymn-book."

"You didn't think of that yourself," said the old hag.

When he got back to the ship, the crew were still at church, so he thought he would try the tablecloth by unfolding just a corner of it and see what it could do before he laid it on the table. In a trice there was no end of delicious food and the finest drink with it. He tasted just a mouthful, and then gave the dog all he could stuff down. As soon as the church-goers came on board, the skipper asked: "Wherever did you get all that food for the dog? Why, he's as round as a sausage and as lazy as a snail!"

"Oh," said the boy, "I just gave him the bones."

"You're a good boy to remember the dog," said the skipper.

No sooner had the boy spread out the cloth than in a trice it was covered with such food and drink as they had never laid their eyes on before.

Now when the boy was alone again with the dog, he wanted to try the sword, too, so he struck him with the black edge, and he dropped down dead on the deck. Then he turned it round and struck him with the white edge, and he came to life again and wagged his tail at his playmate. But the boy did not have a chance to try the book.

The Tobacco-Boy

Then they sailed well and far until at last a storm came over them which lasted many days, and they lay to and drove till they no longer knew where they were. At last the wind went down, and they came to a country far away, where none of them had ever been before, but they could see there was great mourning there, and there was good reason for it, for the princess was a leper. The king came down to the ship and asked if there was no one on board who could save and cure her.

No, those who were on deck said no one among them could do it.

"But is there no one else on board?" said the king.

"Why, yes, there's a little good-for-nothing," they answered.

"Well," said the king, "fêch him up, too."

So the boy came and said it was an easy matter to cure her. At this the skipper was so scared and mad with rage that he ran around like a squirrel in a cage. He was afraid the boy would do something that would get them all into trouble, and he thought it was foolish to listen to such childish nonsense. But the king said that wits came with growth, and the child had in him the stuff of the man. The boy had said he could do it, and he would have to try. After all, there were

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many others who had tried and failed. So he took him home to his daughter, and the boy sang a hymn for her. Then the princess was able to lift her arm. When the boy sang it again, she could sit up in bed, and when he had sung it the third time, the king's daughter was quite well.

The king was so happy that he wanted to give him half of his land and kingdom and his daughter into the bargain. The boy thought it certainly was worth while to get half the kingdom and thanked the king very much for it, but added that he could not take the princess, as he had promised to marry some one else.

So he stayed there and got half the kingdom. After a while the country went to war. The boy had to join the army, and you may be sure he did not spare the black edge of his sword. The enemy's soldiers fell like flies, and the king won the day. Then the boy tried the white edge of the sword, and all the enemy soldiers came to life again and surrendered to the king, who had spared their lives after all. As there now were so many to look after, it was not easy to get all the food and drink the king wanted to give them. So the boy had to bring out his tablecloth, and then there was no lack of anything, wet or dry.

When he had been a little longer with the king, he began to long for the burgomaster's daughter.

The Tobacco-Boy

He fitted out four men-of-war and set sail, and when he came to the city where the burgomaster lived, he fired such a salute and banged away so hard that he broke half the window-panes in the city. On board these ships it was as grand as in the king's palace, and he was so splendid himself that the very seams of his clothes were marked out with gold! It was not long before the burgomaster came down to the ship to ask the grand foreigner if he would not come ashore and dine with him. "Why, certainly," he answered, and there he sat down to dinner between the burgomaster's wife and daughter. While they were busiest gossiping and eating and drinking at a great rate, he threw, on the sly, half of the ring into the daughter's glass. It did not take her long to guess what that meant, so she asked to be excused from table and, once outside, fitted the two halves together.

The mother noticed that something was up and hurried after her as fast as she could.

"Can you guess who's inside, mother?" said the daughter.

"No," said the burgomaster's wife.

"He whom papa sold for a roll of tobacco," she said.

At this the burgomaster's wife fainted and fell flat on the floor. Now came the burgomaster, and

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when he had heard the whole story, he came near doing just as his wife had done.

"It is nothing to make a fuss about," said the tobacco-boy. "I've just come to claim the little girl I kissed on the way to school."

Then, turning to the burgomaster's wife, he said: "You should never despise the children of the poor, for no one knows what they may become. There is the making of a man in every boy, and wits come with years."

Taper Tom Who Made the Princess Laugh

ONCE upon a time there lived a king with an only daughter who was famed far and wide for her beauty. She was, however, of so serious a nature that she had never been known to laugh and thought so much of herself that she said "no" to all her suitors, no matter how grand they were; she had even dismissed lords and princes.

The king had long ago lost all patience with her, seeing no reason why she should not marry like other people. She had nothing to wait for; she was quite old enough, she would never be any richer, and half the kingdom she would inherit from her mother.

So the king had a proclamation read from all the pulpits of the land that whoever could make his daughter laugh should have her and half the kingdom. But whoever tried and failed was to have three strips of skin cut out of his back and salt rubbed in afterwards. You may be sure there was many a sore back in the kingdom.

Suitors came from the north and the south, from the east and the west, thinking it was an easy matter to make the princess laugh. There were plenty of queer ones among the lot. But

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despite all the monkeys that came and all their monkey-shines, the princess remained just as solemn and glum as ever.

Now close to the king's palace there dwelt a man with three sons who had also heard the king's proclamation that he who could make the princess laugh should have her and half the kingdom to boot.

The eldest of them wanted to try first, so off he went and up to the palace, where he told the king that he wished to try his luck at making the princess laugh.

"Well, good luck to you," said the king, "but I'm afraid it's of no use, my good fellow, for many have been here and tried, but my daughter is so sad that no one can move her, and I don't want any more to get into trouble."

But the lad felt sure he would succeed. It could not be such a hard job for him to make the princess laugh, for both rich and poor had laughed at him again and again when he had drilled as a soldier under Sergeant Nils. So he began marching up and down outside the princess' window, just like Sergeant Nils. But it was of no avail. The princess was as glum and serious as ever, and they finally carried him off, cut three broad, red strips from his back, and sent him home again.

After he had returned home, the second son

Taper Tom Who Made the Princess Laugh

wanted to try his luck. He was a schoolmaster and a queer looking duck with a terrible limp. As he walked along, he seemed first as short as a small boy and next, when he rose on his left leg, as big and tall as a troll. And he covered the ground at a great pace.

Well, he started off, too, for the palace and said he wanted to see if he could not make the princess laugh.

"You ought to stand some show," said the king, looking him over, "but may the Lord help you if you don't succeed! We cut broader strips for each one who fails."

The schoolmaster went out on the lawn and stood in front of the princess' window. First he read and sang like seven different sextons, and then he chanted and preached like the seven clergymen who had all been in the parish, till the king laughed so hard he had to hold on to the posts of the porch. The princess was about to crack a smile, when she caught herself just in time and kept as solemn as an owl. Schoolmaster Paul did not fare any better than Soldier Peter—for their names were really Peter and Paul. They took him off and cut three strips of skin out of his back, sprinkled salt there, and sent him home, too.

Finally, the youngest of all—and that was Taper Tom—wanted to set forth. But his brothers

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laughed and made fun of him and showed their sore backs, and his father would not let him go, saying it was useless for him to try, for he had no sense at all. He knew nothing and did nothing, but only sat by the hearth like a cat, poking the ashes and whittling pine torches. But Taper Tom did not give in; he begged and bothered them, till they were all so sick of his whining that they let him go to the palace to try his luck.

When he arrived there, he said nothing about wanting to make the princess laugh, but begged for a job. No, they said, they had none to offer him. But Taper Tom did not give up: he said they surely needed some one on such a big place to carry water and kindling for the cook. The king thought that seemed reasonable, and as he, too, became weary of Taper Tom's whining and teasing, he told him, at last, he might stay and bring in kindling and water for the cook.

One day when he went to fetch water from the brook, he saw a big fish under the roots of an old spruce where the brook had washed the earth away. He put his bucket carefully under the fish and caught it. On his way back to the palace, he met an old hag leading a golden goose.

"How do you do, granny?" said Taper Tom, "that's a fine bird you've got. Its feathers are so bright, they shine a long way off. If one only had

Taper Tom Who Made the Princess Laugh such feathers, one wouldn't need to whittle pine torches."

The old hag liked the fish Taper Tom had in his bucket even better than the golden goose, so she offered to swap it for the fish, and as to the goose, she told him, whoever touched it was held fast, if you only said, "Hang on if you want to come along."

Taper Tom was quite willing to swap, saying to himself, "A bird is at least as good as a fish."

"If it's really as you say," he said to the old hag, "why, then, I can use the goose as a fish hook," and he was quite satisfied with the bargain.

He had not gone far before he met another old woman who, as soon as she saw the lovely golden goose, came over to pet it. She smirked and wheedled and begged Taper Tom to let her pet the golden goose just once.

"All right," said Taper Tom, "but you mustn't take any of its gold feathers!"

Just as she patted the goose, he said: "Hang on, if you want to come along."

The old hag tugged and pulled, but, willy-nilly, she had to hang on, and Taper Tom went along as if he were all alone with the golden goose.

When he came farther on, he met a man who was on bad terms with the old hag for a trick she had played on him. When he saw her straining

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with all her might to get loose, and saw how fast she was stuck, he thought he might safely give her a knock just to get even with her. So he kicked her with one foot.

"Hang on, if you want to come along!" said Taper Tom, and the man had to follow on, hopping on one leg, whether he wanted to or not. The more he tugged and pulled, the worse off he was, for then he was jerked and nearly fell backwards.

They had gone on a good piece and almost reached the palace, when they met the king's smith on his way to the smithy with his tongs in his hand. This smith was a practical joker, always full of mischief and deviltries. When he saw the procession coming along, limping and jumping, he doubled up with laughter. Then he said to himself: "This must be a flock of geese for the princess, but goodness only knows which one is the goose and which is the gander. That must be the gander wandering ahead. Goosie, goosie, goosie, goosie, goosie," he called, making believe at the same time he was throwing them corn.

But the procession did not stop. The man and the old hag only looked angrily at the smith for making fun of them.

So the smith, who was a strong fellow, said to himself: "What a joke it would be to stop that

Taper Tom Who Made the Princess Laugh whole flock of geese!" and thereupon he took his pincers and grabbed the old man behind, who then began shrieking and wriggling.

"Hang on if you want to come along," said Taper Tom.

So the smith had to go along, too. He bent his back and dug his heels into the ground and tried his best to get loose, but it was of no use, he stuck as fast as if he were soldered to his own anvil, and had to dance along whether he would or not.

When they reached the palace courtyard, the big watchdog rushed out barking, as if they were tramps or thieves, and when the princess looked out of the window to see what on earth was the matter, she caught sight of the strange procession and suddenly burst out laughing.

This was not enough for Taper Tom.

"Just wait a minute," he said, "and she'll split her sides with laughing!" and he went around behind the palace with his procession. As they went by the kitchen, the door was open, and the cook was stirring the porridge. When she saw Taper Tom and his flock, she rushed out of the door with the spoon in one hand and the kettle of steaming porridge in the other. She laughed so she shook, and when she caught sight of the smith, she doubled up and shrieked with laughter. When she had laughed her fill, she, too, thought the

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golden goose so lovely, that she must go over and stroke it.

"Taper Tom, Taper Tom," she cried, running after him with the porridge spoon in one hand, "do let me pat the lovely bird you've got."

"Tell her to pat me instead," said the smith.

"All right," said Taper Tom.

The cook was angry when she heard this. "What are you saying?" she cried and struck the smith with the porridge spoon.

"Hang on if you want to come along!" said Taper Tom.

So she, too, was stuck and had to follow along, though she scolded and pulled and acted like a wildcat.

But when they came outside the princess's window, there she stood waiting for them, and when she saw they had got the cook along, too, with both the porridge spoon and the kettle, she doubled up and laughed so hard that the king had to come and support her.

So Taper Tom won the princess and half the kingdom, and a grand wedding they had, which was the talk of the whole country, far and wide.

Little Freddie and His Fiddle

ONCE upon a time there was a farmer whose only son was so weakly that he could do no hard work. His name was Freddie, and, as he was undersized, they called him Little Freddie.

As there was so little of food at home, his father went around the countryside to find him a place as cow-herd or errand-boy. But no one wanted the lad until he came to the sheriff. He was quite ready to take him, for he had just dismissed his errand-boy and could not get another, as he was known for a skinflint. Something was better than nothing, thought the farmer. The lad would get his board, he was to work for that, but nothing was said about wages or clothes.

When Little Freddie had been there three years, he wanted to leave, so the sheriff paid him all his wages at once—"a nickel a year; it couldn't be less," said the sheriff. So he got three nickels in all.

Little Freddie thought that was a big sum, for he had never owned so much. Nevertheless, he asked if he was not to have a little more.

"You have got more than you ought to have," said the sheriff.

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"Shan't I have anything then for clothes?" asked Little Freddie, "for those I had when I came are all worn out, and I have had no others." They were now just a bundle of rags and tatters flapping about him.

"As you have got what we agreed on and three nickels to boot," said the sheriff, "I'll have nothing more to do with you."

Little Freddie was, however, allowed to go out in the kitchen and put a little food in his knapsack, after which he took the road to town to buy some clothes.

He was happy as a lark, for he had never laid eyes on a nickel before, and every now and then he felt in his pockets to make sure he had them all three.

When he had gone far, and farther than far, he came to a narrow valley with such high mountains all around that he could not see any way out, and he wondered what there might be on the other side of the mountains, and how he could ever get over them.

But over he had to go, so he started off with a will. As he had not much strength, he was obliged to rest from time to time, and then he counted over his money. When he reached the very top, he found nothing but a great plain overgrown with moss. There he sat down to see if

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he had all his nickels, and the first thing he knew, a poor man stood before him, a man so tall and broad that when the boy had really taken in how enormous he was, he began to scream.

"Don't be afraid," said the poor man, "for I won't hurt you. I only beg in God's name, for a nickel."

"Oh, dear!" said the lad, "I've only got three nickels, and I was going to town to buy clothes with them."

"I'm worse off than you are," said the poor man, "for I have none at all, and I am even more ragged than you."

"Well, then, I guess you'll have to have it," said the boy.

When he had gone on a while, he was so tired that he sat down again to rest. Looking up, there he saw another poor man, even bigger and uglier than the first, and when the lad really saw how big and tall and ugly he was, he began to scream.

"Don't be afraid of me," said the poor man, "I won't hurt you. I only beg, in God's name, for a nickel."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" said the lad; "I've only got two nickels, and I am going to town to buy clothes with them. If I'd only met you sooner, then—"

"I'm worse off than you are," said the poor



Drawing by Th. Kittelsen

"Don't be afraid," said the poor man, "for I won't hurt you. I only beg, in God's name, for a nickel"

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man, "I have no nickel at all and a bigger body and less clothes."

"Well, then, I think I must let you have it," said the boy.

So he went on a while longer, until he was tired and stopped to rest, but scarcely had he sat down when again a poor man came up to him. He was so big and ugly and tall that the boy had to look up and up—till he was looking up to heaven—and when he really saw how big and ugly and ragged he was, the boy began to scream.

"Don't be afraid of me, my good lad," said the man, "I won't hurt you, for I'm only a poor man who begs for a nickel in God's name."

"Oh, dear, dear!" said Little Freddie, "I've only one nickel left, and I'm going to town to buy clothes with it. If I'd only met you sooner, then—"

"Well, I have no nickel at all," said the poor man, "and a bigger body and less clothes, so I'm worse off than you."

"Then, I guess, you'll have to take the nickel," said Little Freddie—there was no help for it, then they would be even, and he would have nothing left.

"Well, since you have such a good heart," said the poor man, "that you've given away all you owned, I'll give you a wish for each nickel." For

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it was the very same poor man who had got all three nickels, and he had only changed himself each time so the lad should not recognize him.

"I've always had such a longing to hear the sound of a fiddle and see people so merry and happy that they couldn't help dancing," said the lad. "So, if I may wish for what I'd like, then I wish for such a fiddle that everything alive must dance to its music."

"That you may have," said the poor man, "but that was a poor wish. You ought to wish something better for the other two nickels."

"I've always wanted to hunt and shoot," said Little Freddie, "so if I may wish anything I like, I'll wish for a gun that will make me hit everything I aim at, be it ever so far off."

That he might have, too, but the poor man thought it was a sorry wish. "You must really wish better for the last nickel," he said.

"I have always wanted to be in company with good, kind-hearted people," said Little Freddie, "so if I may have what I want, then I wish that no one should deny me the first thing I ask."

"That wish isn't such a bad one," said the poor man, and off he hurried, disappearing into the hills. The boy lay down to sleep, and the next day he came down from the mountains with his fiddle and his gun.

Little Freddie and His Fiddle

First, he went to the storekeeper and begged for clothes, and then at one farm he asked for a horse, and at another he asked for a sleigh, and at one place he wanted a fur coat, and no one could say "No" to him. However stingy they were, they simply had to give him whatever he asked for. At last he went about the countryside like a fine gentleman, with both horse and sleigh.

He had driven on quite a distance when he met the sheriff for whom he had worked.

"How do you do, master," said Little Freddie, stopping and taking off his hat.

"How do you do," said the sheriff, "but have I ever been your master?" he asked.

"Why, don't you remember that I worked for you for three years for three nickels?" said Little Freddie.

"My goodness, how you have risen in the world!" said the sheriff. "How on earth have you become such a swell?"

"Oh, that's telling," said the little fellow.

"Are you such a jolly fellow that you carry a fiddle about with you?" asked the sheriff.

"Yes, I have always longed to get people to dance," said the boy, "but the finest thing I've got is this gun. I bring down almost everything I aim at, no matter how far off it is. Do you see

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the magpie sitting over there on the spruce tree?" asked Little Freddie. "What do you bet I can't hit it from here?"

The sheriff did not mind betting, even to putting up his own horse and farm and a hundred dollars to boot, that Little Freddie could not hit the magpie. Yes, he would bet every cent he had on him and fetch the bird when it fell. The sheriff did not believe there was a gun that could shoot so far.

But bang went the gun, and down fell the magpie into a bramble thicket, and the sheriff rushed over to the thicket after it, picked it up, and showed it to the boy. All at once Little Freddie began to play his fiddle, and the sheriff danced till the thorns scratched him. The boy played on, and the sheriff danced and cried and begged for mercy, while his clothes flew around him in rags, and he had scarcely a thread left on his back.

"Well, now I think you're as ragged as I was when I left your service," said the boy, "so now I'll let you off." But first the sheriff had to pay what he had bet that the boy could not hit the magpie.

When the boy came to town, he went to an inn. There he fiddled, and all who came danced, and he lived happily and at his ease. He had no

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cares, for no one could deny him anything he asked for.

But one day, when the fun was at its best, a watchman came to drag the boy off to jail, for the sheriff had entered a complaint against him, saying the boy had waylaid him and robbed him and almost taken his life; and now he was to be hung.

But Little Freddie knew a way out of everything, and that was with his fiddle. He began playing, and the watchmen had to dance till they lay there gasping. Then soldiers were sent, but they came off no better than the watchmen. As soon as Little Freddie took up his fiddle, they had to dance as long as he could play, but they were done for long before that.

So at last they lay in wait and seized him when he was asleep, and when they had him fast, he was sentenced to be hung at once, and they lost no time in taking him to the gallows. No end of people came flocking to see this wonder, and the sheriff was there, too, as happy as a lark, to get even for the money and the skin he had lost and watch them hang the boy. But it did not go fast, for Little Freddie was weak on his pins, and pretended to be even more so. He had his gun and his fiddle along, too, for no one could get them away from him, and when he came to

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the gallows and had to climb the rounds, he rested on each one. He sat down when he got to the last one and asked if they would not grant him just one favor. He did so want to play a tune on his fiddle before they hanged him.

"It was indeed a sin and a shame to deny him that much," they said.

But the sheriff begged them for heaven's sake not to let him touch a string, or everybody's goose would be cooked. If they let the boy play, why, as for himself, they'd have to tie him to the nearest birch tree.

It did not take Little Freddie long to get a jig out of his fiddle, and every one and every living thing there began dancing, both those who went on two legs and those who went on four, parson and deacon and clerk and tramp and sheriff and masters and dogs and pigs. They danced, and they laughed and screamed at each other. Some danced till they dropped, and others danced till they swooned. They all fared badly, but the sheriff worst of all, for he was tied to the birch tree and rubbed the skin all off his back as he danced. No one thought of doing anything to Little Freddie. They let him go wherever he pleased with his fiddle and gun, and he lived merrily all his days, for no one could say "No" to anything he asked.

The Widow's Son

ONCE upon a time there lived a very poor widow who had an only son. She slaved for the boy until he was old enough to be confirmed, but then she told him she could not support him any longer, and he would have to go out and earn his own living.

So the boy left home, and after traveling a day or two he met a stranger.

"Where are you going?" asked the man.

"Out into the world to try to find a job," answered the boy.

"Would you like to enter my service?"

"Why, yes, I guess one place is as good as another," said the boy.

"I shall treat you well," said the man. "All you will have to do is to keep me company."

So the boy went home with the man and had plenty to eat and drink and little or nothing to do, but, on the other hand, he never saw a living soul except his master.

One day the man said to him, "Now, I'm going away for a week. You will have to be alone, and you mustn't go into any of these four rooms. If you do, I'll kill you when I come home."

"No," said the boy; "oh, no, indeed!" But when the man had been gone some three or four

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days, his curiosity got the better of him, and he went into one of the rooms. He looked all around and saw nothing but a wild-briar stick lying on a shelf over the door.

"Well, it's mighty strange he should forbid me so strictly to look at *that*," thought the boy.

When the week was over, the man came home again.

"I don't suppose you have been in any of the rooms?" he said.

"Certainly not," said the boy.

"Well, I'll soon find out," said the man, and he went into the room where the boy had been.

"Ah! you *have* been in there in spite of what you say," said the man; "now I shall kill you!" At this the boy wept and begged so hard for his life that at last the man let him off with a sound thrashing. When it was over, they were as good friends as ever.

A little later the man went away again, this time to be gone a fortnight. Before he went, he told the boy that he must not set foot inside any of the rooms he had not already been in; where he had been before, he might go again.

Of course, it happened just as before, except that this time the boy kept out for a week. When he went into this second room, he saw nothing

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but a shelf over the door on which stood a big rock and a water-pitcher.

Again the boy thought that was a very small thing to be so particular about.

When the man came home, he asked the boy if he had been in any of the forbidden rooms, and the boy said, how could he think such a thing, of course not!

"Well, I'll soon find out," said the man, and when he saw the boy really *had* been there, he said: "This time you don't get off; I'm going to kill you."

But again the boy wept and begged so hard that he once more got off with a sound thrashing, one he would not easily forget. After he had recovered from it, he was as lively as ever, and he and the man were the same old friends.

Some time after, the man had to leave again, to be away this time for three weeks, and he warned the boy that, if he went into the third room, he might just as well give up all hope of life.

At the end of a fortnight, the boy could not stand it any longer and sneaked into the third room; there he saw nothing but a trap-door in the floor. When he lifted it and looked down, he saw a big copper cauldron below, sizzling and boiling, though there was no fire under it. It

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would be fun to find out if it was warm, thought the boy, so he stuck his finger into the cauldron; he pulled it out, and it was gilt all over. He washed it and he scrubbed it, but he could not get the gilding off, so he bound a rag round it, and when the man came home and asked him what had happened to his finger, the boy said he had cut himself badly. The man tore the rag off, and then he saw what was the matter with the finger. At first he was going to kill the boy right away, but as usual he wept and begged so piteously that his master ended by thrashing him so soundly that he could not get out of bed for three days. Then the man took a little pot of salve down from the wall and rubbed the boy with it, and he was quite well again.

A little while after this, the man left for the fourth time, saying he would not be back for a month. This time he told the boy that if he went into the fourth room, nothing on earth could save him. The boy kept out for one, two, and even three weeks, but then he just could not control himself longer; he simply *had* to go into that room, so in he sneaked. There in a stall stood a big black horse with halter and brazier at his head and feed-bag at his tail. The boy thought this was all topsy-turvy, and changed the feed-bag around to the horse's head.

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Then the horse spoke and said, "Since you're so kind-hearted as to give me something to eat, I'll save you. Your master is really a troll. Should he come back now and find you, he's sure to kill you. So now you must go upstairs to the room just over this one and take one of the suits of armor hanging there. For goodness' sake don't take any of the shiny ones, but choose the rustiest you can find, and pick out a sword and a saddle at the same time."

The boy did as he was told, but the whole load was very heavy to carry.

When he came back, the horse told him to undress and get stark naked into the cauldron which was boiling in the other room, and have a good wash.

"I guess I'll be a sight," thought the boy, but he did it all the same. When he had finished washing, he looked as fit as a fiddle and as pink and white as strawberries and cream, and he was twice as strong as ever before.

"Do you feel any change?" asked the horse.

"Yes," said the boy.

"Try to lift me," said the horse.

Yes, he could do it, and it was no work at all to wield the sword.

"Saddle me," said the horse, "and put on the armor and take the wild-briar stick and the stone

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and the water-pitcher and the pot of salve, and then we'll be off."

When the boy had mounted the horse, they set off at such a breakneck pace that it fairly made his head spin.

They had galloped a while, when the horse said: "It seems to me I hear a rumbling. Look around and see if you can see any one."

"Many, many are coming after us. There must be a score of them," said the boy.

"That's the troll, sure enough," said the horse, "he and his gang."

And on they sped for a while longer, until those who followed had almost caught up with them.

"Now, throw your wild-briar stick over your shoulder," said the horse, "only be sure to throw it good and far."

The boy did so, and in a trice a great, dense forest of wild briar sprang up behind him.

So the boy got a good, long start while the trolls had to go home to fetch something with which to hew their way through the forest.

After a while the horse said again, "Look back; do you see anything now?"

"Yes, a lot of them," said the boy. "There must be a whole parish full."

"That's the troll, sure as fate," said the horse, "only now he's got even a bigger mob along."

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Throw the big rock, only be sure to throw it good and far."

The boy did as the horse bade him, and a great, high mountain rose up behind them. So the trolls had to go home to get something with which to tunnel their way through the mountain, and the boy had a chance to get another long way ahead.

By and by the horse asked the boy to look round once more, and this time he saw a swarm of trolls as big as an army, all clad in shining armor.

"Yes," said the horse, "that's the troll with every one of his followers. Now throw the water-pitcher behind you, only be sure not to spill any water on me."

The boy did as he was bid, but, though he was just as careful as he knew how to be, he spilled a drop upon the horse's leg. Suddenly, a great big lake appeared, but as a drop had fallen on the horse, they were left far out in the water. Luckily, the horse could swim to the shore.

When the trolls came to the lake they lay down to drink it all up. They gulped and they gulped till at last they burst.

"Now we're rid of them," said the horse.

They rode on for a long, long while till at last they came to a green field in a wood.

"Now take all your armor off," said the horse,

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"and put on your ragged old clothes. Unsaddle me and let me go, hang everything inside this hollow linden tree, make yourself a wig of spruce-lichen, and go up to the palace near-by here and ask for a job. When you need me, just come here and shake the bridle, and I'll come."

Well, the boy did as the horse told him to, and when he had put on the lichen wig, he looked so pale and wretched and frowsy that no one would have known him. Then he went up to the palace and begged first to be allowed to carry water and kindling for the cook.

Soon the kitchen-maid asked him: "Why have you got that ugly wig on? Take it off. I won't have any one looking so frightful in here."

"I can't take it off," answered the boy. "My head isn't quite clean."

"Do you think I want you round the food if you are as dirty as that?" said the cook. "Go down to the coachman. You're best fitted to clean out the stable."

But when the coachman told him to take off the wig, he got the same answer, so he did not want him, either.

"You had better go down to the head gardener," said the coachman. "You're best fitted to dig in the garden."

The head gardener let him stay. None of the

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other servants wanted to share a bed with him, so he had to sleep alone under the stairs of the summer-house, which stood high up on posts. He found some moss to make himself a bed, and on that he was pretty comfortable.

When he had been at the palace for a while, one morning, just as the sun rose, he happened to take off his wig, and as he stood there washing, he was so handsome, it did one's heart good to look at him.

The princess, who was looking out of the window, saw him and thought she had never seen such a good-looking fellow. So she asked the head gardener why he had to sleep out under the stairs.

"Oh, none of the other servants are willing to sleep with him," said the head gardener.

"Let him come up to-night and sleep by my door," said the princess. "Then perhaps the servants won't think they are too good to sleep under the same roof."

The head gardener gave her message to the boy.

"You don't think I'd do that!" said the boy. "Why, the servants would begin to gossip about the princess and me."

"You have good reason to fear," said the head gardener. "You, who are such a beauty!"

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"Well, I suppose I'd better do as I'm told," said the boy.

When he was to go upstairs that night, he tramped and stamped so hard they had to tell him to go quietly or the king would hear him. When he came to the princess's room, he lay down, fell asleep and began at once to snore. So the princess said to her handmaiden:

"Steal over and pull off his lichen wig."

The handmaiden was just about to do it, when the boy quickly clapped both hands to his head, so she did not get the wig. Then he lay down and began to snore again. The princess motioned to the handmaiden again, and this time she snatched off the wig, and there lay the boy just as handsome and as pink and white as he had been when the princess saw him at sunrise. After that the boy always slept by the princess's door.

But before long the king found out that the boy who worked in the garden slept every night in the princess's room, and then the king was so furious that he was ready to kill him. But he decided not to do it after all; instead he cast him into the tower dungeon, and his daughter he locked up in her room, which she was never to leave by day or night. All her weeping and her prayers for herself and the boy were in vain and, in fact, only made the king angrier than ever.

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Shortly after this a war broke out, and the king had to defend his kingdom against a neighboring monarch. When the boy heard this, he begged his jailer to go and tell the king that he wanted a sword and armor and permission to go out and fight. The courtiers all burst out laughing when the jailer came on this errand, and begged the king to send the boy some rusty old armor, so they could have the fun of seeing the poor wretch start out to fight. This the king sent him and besides a miserable old nag who limped on three legs, dragging the fourth after him.

Then they all went out to meet the enemy, but they had not gone far from the palace when the boy and his nag got stuck in a bog. There he sat pulling at the bridle and crying, "Get up! get up, I tell you!" This amused them all very much and they laughed and made fun of the boy as they rode by him.

No sooner were they gone than he rushed up to the linden tree, put on his armor, and shook the bridle. In a moment the horse was there, and he said:

"You do your best, and I'll do mine!"

The battle was raging when they arrived, and the king was in a bad hole. In a jiffy the boy put the enemy to flight, and the king and his followers wondered who it could be that had come to their

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rescue, but no one got close enough to the boy to recognize him, and when the battle was over he was gone. When they got back, there sat the boy still in the bog pulling and shouting at his three-legged nag. They laughed at him again and said:

“Just look, there he is still sitting, the poor ninny!”

When they went out the next day, there was the boy still stuck fast. Again they laughed and poked fun at him, but no sooner had they ridden by than the boy rushed up to the linden tree, and everything happened just as on the day before. Everybody wondered who was the unknown knight who had helped them, but no one got near enough to speak to him, and, of course, no one ever thought of the boy.

When they went home in the evening and saw the boy still sitting on the nag, they laughed at him again, and one of them shot him in the leg with an arrow. He shrieked and made such a fuss that the king threw him his handkerchief to bind around the leg.

When they started out on the third morning, there sat the boy still in the bog.

“Get up, get up, I say!” he cried to the old jade.

“I declare, he’ll be sitting there until he starves to death,” said the king’s people as they rode by,

The Widow's Son

and they laughed till they almost rolled off their horses.

As soon as they were gone, the boy rushed up to the linden tree and was back on the battle-field once more just in the nick of time. That day he killed the enemy king, and the war was at an end.

Now that the fighting was over, the king had time to see his handkerchief around the leg of the unknown warrior, and so recognized him at once, and they all brought him back to the palace.

The princess saw him from her window, and you can imagine how happy she was. "There is my true love, too," she cried.

The boy brought out the jar of salve and put some on his leg, and then on all the wounded, so that they were all instantly cured. And so it came to pass that he won the hand of the princess.

On his wedding day, when he went out to the stable, there stood his horse, moping, with his head down and eating nothing at all. The young king—for he was now a king with half the kingdom—spoke to the horse and asked him what was the matter, to which the horse replied:

"Now I've helped you to high estate, I don't want to live any longer. Take the sword and cut off my head!"

"No, that's the last thing I'll do," said the king,

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"but I'll give you everything you want, and you need never move again."

"If you don't do as I ask, I'll have to take my own life," said the horse.

Well, then, the king had to do it, but as he lifted the sword to strike, he felt so badly that he had to look away. He did not have the heart to see the stroke. But no sooner had he chopped off the horse's head than there, where the horse had stood, was a beautiful prince.

"Where on earth did you come from?" asked the king.

"Why, I was the horse," answered the prince. "I used to be king of the same country as the one you slew in battle yesterday. It was he who bewitched me and sold me to the troll. Now that he's dead, I'll get my kingdom back, and you and I will be neighbor kings, and we'll never fight each other."

Nor did they ever do so. They were friends as long as they lived and often used to go and visit each other.

The Giant Who Did Not Keep His Heart in His Body

ONCE upon a time there was a king who had seven sons, and he loved them so much that he could not bear to be without them; at least one of them must always be with him. When they all were grown up, six were to set out to woo, but the father wanted to keep the youngest at home and let the others each bring back a princess to the palace. So the king gave the six the finest clothes you ever set eyes on and which shone from afar, and each got a horse costing many, many hundred dollars, and so off they set. After they had been to many a palace and seen the princesses, they came at last to a king who had six daughters. Such lovely princesses they had never laid their eyes on, so each wooed one of them, and when they all had sweethearts they set off home again, quite forgetting that they were to bring a princess for Askelad, who had been left behind; they were so head over heels in love with their own sweethearts.

Now, when they were well on their way home, they came close to a steep mountain-side, where a cruel giant lived. He came out, and, seeing them as they passed, he turned them all, both princes and princesses, into rocks.

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The king waited and waited for his six sons, but for all his waiting not one of them came back. He grieved and grew so dejected that he said he could never be happy again.

"If I hadn't you left," he said to Askelad, "I should not care to live, for I am always mourning for your brothers who are lost."

"But now I'd been thinking of asking your leave to set out and try to find them," said Askelad.

"No, I can't allow that," said the father sadly. "You would only stay away, too."

But there was no holding Askelad; he begged and prayed so long that the king finally had to let him go. As he had given the other six princes and their followers all his best horses, there was nothing left for Askelad but a worthless old nag, but that did not bother him. He jumped on the old-broken-down horse and said, "Good-bye, father! I'll surely be back, and perhaps I will bring my brothers with me," and so off he rode.

After he had ridden a bit, he came to a raven that lay flapping its wings in the road, so starved that it could not get out of the way.

"Oh, do give me something to eat," said the raven, "and I'll help you in your utmost need."

"I haven't much, and you don't look as if you could help much, either," said the prince, "but I can always give you a little, and I see you really

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need it." So he shared some of his food with the poor bird.

He had ridden on a while longer when he came to a brook by which a big salmon lay flopping on the dry land, trying to get back into the water.

"Oh, do help me back into the water again," cried the salmon to the prince, "and I'll help you when you need it most."

"The help you'll give me won't be worth much," said the prince, "but it's a shame to let you starve to death." With that he pushed the fish back into the brook.

Then he rode a long, long way and at last met a wolf who was so hungry he could only stagger along the road.

"Oh, do give me your horse," said the wolf. "I'm faint for food, for it's two years since I had a square meal."

"No," said Askelad, "this will never do. First I met a raven to whom I gave my food, and then a salmon, and him I put back into the water, and now you want my horse. I can't give him up, for I'll have nothing to ride on."

"Oh, please do help me," said old Gray Shanks. "You can ride on my back, and I'll help you in turn in your utmost need."

"The help you'll give me won't be very great,"

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said the prince, "but I guess you had better take my horse, since you are in such need."

When the wolf had eaten up the horse, Askelad put the bit in the wolf's mouth and the saddle on his back. By this time the wolf had grown so strong that it was a mere nothing to set off with the prince, who had never ridden so fast before.

"When we've gone a little farther I'll show you the giant's castle," said Gray Shanks, and it was not long before they were there.

"See, here we are," he said. "There you see all your six brothers whom the giant has turned to rocks, and there are their six brides; over yonder is the door through which you must enter."

"No, I don't dare to," said the prince, "the giant will take my life, too."

"No, no," said the wolf, "as soon as you are inside you'll meet a princess who will surely tell you what you are to do to put an end to the giant. You do just as she tells you."

Well, Askelad went in, but he was awfully afraid. When he came in, the giant was away, but in one of the rooms sat the princess, just as the wolf had said, and Askelad had never laid eyes on such a lovely maiden.

"Goodness gracious, how did you ever get here?" said the princess as soon as she saw him. "It will be your certain death. It is impossible

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to slay the giant who lives here, because he doesn't keep his heart in his body."

"Well, but if I've got as far as this," said Askelad, "I had better have a try. I mean to save my brothers, who are turned to rocks outside, and I should like to save you, too, since you are in his clutches."

"Well, if you won't listen to reason," answered the princess, "I'll try to help you find a way out. Creep in under the bed and listen well to what I say to him, but for goodness' sake don't make a noise."

No sooner had he crept under the bed than the giant came back.

"Ho-ho," said the giant, "here I smell Christian blood."

"I don't wonder," said the princess, "a magpie flew by with a man's bone and dropped it down the chimney. I hurried to get it out, but I guess some smell of it is left."

Well, the giant said no more about it, and that evening the princess said, "There is something I'd like to ask you, if only I dared."

"What is it?" said the giant.

"I want to ask you where you keep your heart, since you don't keep it in your body," said the princess.

"Well, that's none of your business," said the

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giant, "but since you want to know, it's under the door-sill."

"Ho-ho," thought Askelad, under the bed, "now I'll soon find it."

The giant got up at break of dawn and hurried off to the woods. No sooner had he gone than Askelad and the princess began looking for his heart under the door-sill, but for all their hunting they found nothing.

"That's the time he fooled us," said the princess. "We'll have to try him again."

So she picked all the prettiest flowers she could find and strewed them around the door-sill, after they had put it back just as they had found it. When it was time for the giant to come back, Askelad crept under the bed again.

No sooner was he there than the giant returned.

"Ho-ho, in here I smell Christian blood," said the giant.

"Yes, a magpie flying by with a man's bone in his beak dropped it down the chimney," said the princess. "I hurried to get it out, but I guess the house still smells of it." The giant believed this, so nothing more was said about it. After a little while he asked who had strewn flowers around the door-sill.

"Oh, I, of course," said the princess.

"What is that for?" said the giant.

The Giant

"Why, I'm so fond of you, I had to do it," said the princess, "after I knew you kept your heart there."

"You don't say," said the giant, "but I was only fooling you."

Again that evening the princess asked the giant where he kept his heart, for she said she was so fond of him, she simply must know.

"It's over in the cupboard against the wall," said the giant.

"Well, if that's the case," thought Askelad and the princess, "then it will be easy to find."

The next morning the giant was up again bright and early and off for the woods. No sooner had he gone than Askelad and the princess began hunting in the cupboard for the giant's heart. For all they hunted, nothing could be found there, either.

"Well," said the princess, "we'll just have to try again."

So she decked out the cupboard, too, with wreaths and flowers, and toward evening Askelad crept back under the bed.

Then in came the giant.

"Ho-ho," he said, "there's such a smell of Christian blood here!"

"Yes, a little while ago a magpie flew by with a man's bone in his beak and dropped it down the

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chimney," said the princess, "I hurried to get it out, but I guess the house still smells of it."

When the giant heard that, he said no more. Soon after he saw the flowers and wreaths all around the cupboard and asked who had put them there.

The princess owned up.

"What nonsense and folderol!" said the giant.

"Well, I am so fond of you, I just had to do it when I knew that your heart was inside the cupboard," said the princess.

"Were you such a ninny as to believe that?" asked the giant.

"Why, of course, I believed it," said the princess, "when you told me so."

"Well, you are a fool," said the giant; "you'll never reach the place where my heart is."

"All the same," said the princess, "it would be grand to know where it is."

The princess pleaded so earnestly that at last the giant relented and promised to tell her.

"Far, far away," he said, "there's an island in a lake; on that island stands a church, and in that church there's a well; in that well swims a duck, in that duck there's an egg, and in that egg—there lies my heart, child."

Early next morning the giant hurried off to the woods while it was still gray dawn.

The Giant

"Well, now I'll have to hurry off, too," said Askelad. "If I only knew the right road!" He said farewell to the princess, and when he came outside the giant's castle, there stood the wolf waiting for him. Askelad told him all that had happened at the giant's and said, if he only knew the way, he would be off to find the well inside the church.

The wolf told him to jump on his back, for he would find the way, and off they went like a wind, over hedges and fields, over hill and dale.

After journeying for many, many days, at last they came to a lake. As he had no boat, the prince did not know how he would get to the island, but Gray Shanks told him not to be afraid, and into the water he went and swam, with the prince on his back to the island. There stood the church, but the keys hung so high upon the tower that the prince did not know how he would ever get them down.

"You had better call the raven," said Gray Shanks.

Then the prince called the raven, who came at once, and brought down the keys, so the prince unlocked the church and went right in. When he reached the well, there sure enough was the duck, swimming back and forth, just as the giant had said. The prince coaxed and coaxed till at

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last the duck came near, and he grabbed it. Just as he lifted it out of the water, the duck dropped the egg into the well, and now Askelad was at his wit's end to know how to get it out again.

"Well, now you'll have to call the salmon," said Gray Shanks.

So the prince called the salmon who came and got the egg, and then the wolf told Askelad to squeeze it. As soon as ever he did so, the giant began to scream so loud they heard him all the way to the island.

"Squeeze it again," said the wolf, and as the prince did so the giant howled even worse, and begged piteously to be spared, promising everything the prince wanted if he only would not squeeze his heart in two.

"Tell him if he brings back to life your six brothers and their brides whom he turned to stone," said the wolf, "you'll let him escape."

To this the giant at once agreed, and then turned the six brothers into princes and their brides into princesses.

"Now, squeeze the egg to pieces," said the wolf. Askelad did so, and the giant burst into a thousand pieces.

Now when he had finished with the giant, Askelad rode back on the wolf to the giant's castle, and

The Giant

there stood all his six brothers, alive and well, each with his bride. Askelad went into the mountain castle for his princess, and then they all journeyed back to the palace together. You may be sure the old king was happy when he saw all his seven sons with their brides.

“But, just the same,” said the king, “the sweetest of all the princesses is Askelad’s bride, and he and she must sit side by side at the head of the table.”

Then they began a wonderful wedding feast, and if they have not finished it, why then they are still feasting.

The Green Knight

ONCE upon a time there was a king who was a widower, and he had an only daughter. It is an old saying that a widower's grief is like knocking your funny-bone, which hurts but does not last long. So the king married again and this time a queen with two daughters. She was no better than all the other stepmothers, for she was ugly and spiteful all the time to her stepdaughter. Years went on, and the princess had grown up, when war was declared, and the king had to go forth and fight for his kingdom and crown. The three daughters were allowed to say what they wanted him to buy and bring home to them in case he beat the enemy.

Well, the first one asked for a gold spinning-wheel so small that it could stand on a dime, and the second one asked for a gold winder, so small it could stand on a dime. That was what they wanted, though it would be of no use to them for spinning or winding. But the king's own daughter did not ask him to bring her any present; she only wanted him to meet the Green Knight from her.

The king went out to fight, and whatever happened he always won, and, however hard it was, he bought his stepdaughters what he had promised,

The Green Knight

but ne quite forgot what his own daughter had begged him to do.

Now the king arranged for a feast to celebrate his victory, and at this he saw the Green Knight. Then he remembered what he had promised his daughter and gave him her greeting. The knight thanked the king and gave him a book which looked like a prayer-book with clasps to its cover. The king was to take this home and give her, but he must not open it, nor must the princess until she was alone.

The war well over, and all the celebrations, the king went home, and he had hardly got inside the door before the stepdaughters were at him to get what he had promised to buy them. "Yes, he had kept his word," he said. But his own daughter hung back and asked for nothing, so the king forgot all about her present, until one day when he was going out and put on the coat he had worn at the feast. As he put his hand in his pocket for his handkerchief, he suddenly felt the book, so then he gave it to his daughter and said he was to greet her from the Green Knight and tell her she must not open the book till she was all alone.

That evening when she was alone up in her bedroom, she unclasped the book and immediately she heard a tune so beautiful that she had

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never heard the like before; and then the Green Knight suddenly appeared. He told her that whenever she opened the book he would come to her, no matter where she was, and when she shut it he would be off again at once.

Well, she unclasped it many an evening when she was alone and all was quiet, and the knight always came to her and stayed a while. But the stepmother, who poked her nose into everything, suspected there was some one in the daughter's room, and it was not long before she told this to the king.

He would not believe a word of it. No, he said, scolding the queen, they must watch and see if it was so, before they came and told him such nonsense.

So, one evening when they were standing outside the door and listening, they thought they distinctly heard talking inside. When they opened the door, there was no one.

"Whom were you talking to?" asked the stepmother, crossly.

"To nobody," said the princess.

"Why, I heard some one quite plainly," said the queen.

"Oh," said the princess, "I was just lying down and reading aloud in my prayer-book."

"Show it to me," ordered the queen.

The Green Knight

There was nothing but a prayer-book, and she really must be allowed to read that, said the king.

The stepmother thought just the same as before, so she bored a hole in the wall and peeped through that. One evening, when she heard the knight there, she burst the door open and flew into the stepdaughter's room like a gale of wind, but the stepdaughter did not take long to clasp the book, so he was gone in an instant. Yet, quick as she had been, the stepmother had a glimpse of him; so now she was sure some one had been there.

Then the king went off on a long journey. While he was away the queen had a deep hole dug in the ground, and inside that they built a house, but in the plaster she had them put rat poison and other strong poisons, so that not even a mouse could get in. The master mason was well paid and promised to leave the country, but this he did not do; he just stayed where he was. Then the princess and her handmaiden were put down into the dungeon, and the entrance was walled up till only a small hole was left at the top, through which they could send her down food. Here she sat and sorrowed, and the time seemed long and ever longer. At last she remembered that she had her book with her and took it out and opened



Drawing by Th. Kittelsen

After a long time they came to a palace all draped in black

The Green Knight

it. At first she heard the same lovely tune she had heard before, and then a pitiful wailing, and all at once the Green Knight appeared.

"I'm at death's door," he said, and then he told her that the stepmother had put poison in the wall, and that he doubted if he could get out alive. So when she was obliged to close the book, she heard the same noise and wailing.

But the handmaiden who was with her had a sweetheart, and she was able to send him word to go to the master mason and beg him to make the hole at the top of the door large enough for them to creep through it. The princess promised to pay him so well that he could live in plenty all his days. So, he did as she asked. Then they escaped, both she and the handmaiden, and they journeyed far, far away into strange countries, and wherever they came, they asked for news of the Green Knight.

After a long time they came to a palace all draped in black, and just as they were passing by, it began to pour. So the princess stepped into the church porch to wait there till the rain was over.

While they were standing there a young man and an old man came along, who also wanted to take shelter from the rain, so the princess drew back into the corner where they could not see her.

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"Why is it," said the young man, "that the palace is all draped in black?"

"Don't you know?" said the old man; "the prince is sick unto death, the one they called the 'Green Knight,' " and then he told how it all had happened.

When the younger man heard how he had fallen sick, he asked if there was not some one who could make him well again.

"No," said the other; "there's only one cure, and that is if the maiden who was shut up in the house underground were to come and pick healing herbs in the fields and boil them in sweet milk and wash him with them three times." Then he told what herbs were needed to make him well again.

All this the princess heard, and she was listening with all her might. As soon as the rain was over, the two men left, and the princess ran out, too.

As soon as they got home where they were living, the princess and her handmaiden hurried out into the fields and woods to hunt for the herbs, and they picked and gathered, both early and late, all those she was to boil. Then she bought a doctor's hat and a doctor's gown and went to see the king and offered to make the prince well again.

"No, there is no use in trying," said the king. So many have been there and tried, but the Green

The Green Knight

Knight had always grown worse instead of better. But she would not give up and insisted that he would get well again quickly and entirely.

So the king at last said she might try, and after she had gone into the Green Knight's bedroom, she washed him for the first time. When she came back the next day, he was so much better he could sit up in bed; the day after he was strong enough to walk across the room, and the third day he was as lively as a fish in water.

"He must go out hunting," said the doctor.

Now the king became as fond of the doctor as the birds are of daylight. But the doctor wanted to go home.

So she threw off the hat and gown, dressed, and got dinner ready. Then she unclasped the book. The same happy tune came as before, and in a trice the Green Knight appeared. He wondered how he had got there. So she told him how it all had happened, and when they had eaten and drunk, he took her right up to the palace and told the king the whole story from beginning to end.

Then there was a wedding and a wedding feast, and when it was over, the couple started off for the bride's home. Her father was full of joy to see them, but the stepmother was taken and rolled round in a cask full of nails.

The Golden Bird

THERE was once a king who had a garden, and in that garden stood an apple tree, and on that apple tree there grew every year one golden apple. But when the time came round to pick it, it was gone, and no one knew who took it nor what became of it. It simply vanished.

This king had three sons, and one day he said to them that the one who could get him the apple, or catch the thief, should have the kingdom after him, were he the eldest or the youngest or the middle one.

The eldest was to try first, and he sat down under the tree to watch for the thief. Toward night there came flying a golden bird so bright that his feathers gleamed from afar. When the king's son saw this shining bird, he was so frightened that he did not dare to stay, but hurried home as fast as his legs could carry him.

Next morning the apple was gone. By that time the king's son had gotten his courage back, so he began preparing for a journey, for he wanted to start out and see if he could not find the bird. The king fitted him out well, sparing neither money nor clothes.

After he had gone along a while, he grew hungry and took out his knapsack, thinking to eat his

The Golden Bird

dinner by the wayside. Then out came a fox from a clump of spruce trees and sat down and looked on.

"Oh, won't you be so kind as to give me a little food?" said the fox.

"I'll give you burnt horn," said the king's son. "I need my food myself. No one knows how far or how long I may have to travel."

"Well, I suppose that's so," said the fox, and he went back into the woods.

When the king's son had eaten and rested, he started off again. After a long, long time, he came to a great city, and there was an inn where there always was mirth and never sorrow. This must be a delightful place to stay in, he thought, so there he settled down. But there was so much dancing and drinking and feasting and merriment that he quite forgot all about the bird and the feather and his father and his journey and the whole kingdom, "Out of sight, out of mind!" and there he stayed.

The next year it was the turn of the king's second son to catch the apple thief in the garden. So when the apple was almost ripe, he, too, began sitting under the tree. All at once one night the bird came, shining like the sun, and the boy was so scared that he took to his heels and ran indoors as fast as he could.

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Next morning the apple was gone, but by that time the king's son had grown brave again and wanted to start off and see if he could not find the bird. So he got everything ready, and the king fitted him out well, sparing neither food nor money.

But just the same things befell him as had befallen his brother. When he had gone a piece, he grew hungry, took out his knapsack, and sat down to eat dinner by the roadside. Then out came a fox from a clump of spruce trees and sat down and looked on.

"Oh, be so kind as to give me a little food," said the fox.

"I'll give you burnt horn," said the king's son. "I need my food myself. No one knows how far or how long I may have to travel."

"Well, I suppose that's so," said the fox, going back into the woods, and when the king's son had eaten and rested, he started off again.

After a very long time, he came to the same city and the same inn—there where there was always mirth and never sorrow. He, too, thought this was the place for him, and the very first person he met was his brother, and so there he stayed. His brother had feasted and drunk until he scarcely had any clothes to his back; but now they began all over again, and there was such feast-

The Golden Bird

ing and dancing and merriment that the second brother also forgot all about the bird and the feather and his father and the journey and the whole kingdom. Away he was, and away he stayed, too.

When the time came around again that the apple was almost ripe, it was the turn of the youngest son to go out in the garden and watch for the apple thief. He took a comrade along to help him up in the tree, and he carried with him a keg of beer and a pack of cards to pass the time and keep him from falling asleep. All at once there came such a blaze of light that they could see every one of the bird's feathers while he was still far away. The king's son climbed up the tree in a hurry, and just as the bird flew down and was snatching the apple, the king's son tried to grab him, but all he got was a feather of his tail. So with the feather in his hand he went into the king's bedroom where he was asleep, and it became as bright as broad daylight.

Then he, too, wanted to go out into the wide world to see if he could hear anything about his brothers and catch the bird, for he had been so close to it, he said, that he had set his mark on it and gotten a feather out of its tail.

Well, the king went up and down a long time pondering whether to let him go, too. It was not

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likely that the youngest would succeed any better than the two older ones who ought to know more about the ways of the world, and the king was afraid of losing him, too. But this son begged so charmingly that at last he won his father's consent.

So he prepared for the journey, and the king fitted him out handsomely both with clothes and money, and off he started.

When he had gone a way, he grew hungry and took out his knapsack and sat down to eat dinner by the roadside. He was in full enjoyment of it, when a fox came out of a clump of spruce trees and sat down and looked on.

"Oh, please give me a little food," said the fox.

"I might well need all my food myself," said the boy, "for I can't tell how far I shall have to go. But anyhow I have enough to share a little with you."

When the fox had a bit of meat in his mouth, he asked the prince whither he was bound, and he told the fox his story.

"If you will mind me," said the fox, "I'll help you, and luck will be with you."

This the prince promised, and so they set off together. When they had traveled for a while, they came to the selfsame city and inn where there was always mirth and never sorrow.

The Golden Bird

"I'm afraid I'll have to dodge this place, it's so full of dogs," said the fox.

Then he told the boy where his brothers were and what they were doing, and he added:

"If you go in there you'll get no farther, either."

The prince gave his word and his hand on it that he would not go in, and then each went his way.

But when he came to the inn and heard what music and merriment there was within, he could not help going in—there was no resisting it—and when he met his brothers, there were such wild antics that he forgot all about the fox and the journey and the bird and his father. But when he had been there a while, the fox came along—he had ventured into the city after all—and peeped through the door and winked at the prince, so he came to his senses, and off they started.

When they had walked a while, they saw a high mountain far away, and the fox said:

"Three hundred miles behind the mountain there is a gilt linden tree with leaves of gold, and in that linden tree sits the golden bird whose tail feather you have."

So they kept on toward the mountain. When the time came for the prince to catch the bird, the fox gave him some lovely feathers and told him to wave them in his hand to lure the bird down,

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and then it would come flying and perch on his hand. But the fox told him that he must not touch the linden tree, for there was a big troll who owned it, and if the prince so much as touched the smallest branch, the troll would slay him.

Well, the prince promised not to touch the tree, but when he had the bird on his hand, he thought he must have a twig of the linden tree—how could he help taking it?—it was so bright and tempting. So he picked one, just the very tiniest one. But, in a trice, out came the troll.

“Who is stealing my linden tree and my bird?” shrieked the troll, who was so mad that sparks flashed from him.

“It takes a thief to catch a thief,” said the prince, “but only those who are caught are hanged.”

“Be that as it may,” said the troll, “I’m going to kill you right away.”

The prince said he must really spare his life.

“Well, well,” said the troll, “if you can bring me back the horse which my next door neighbor has stolen from me, I’ll spare your life.”

“But where shall I find him?” asked the prince.

“Oh, he lives three hundred miles behind the big mountain so far away and blue,” said the troll.

So the prince promised to do his best. But when he met the fox he was far from pleased.

The Golden Bird

"Now you have made a mess of it!" said the fox, "if you had only listened to me, we should have been on the way home by now."

So, as it was a question of life and death, and the prince had given his word, they had to make a fresh start. After a long, long time they came to the stable where the prince was to go in and take the horse.

Then the fox said, "When you are inside the stable, you'll see many, many bits hanging on the wall, of both silver and gold. You must not touch them, or the troll will come out and kill you on the spot. You must take the oldest and ugliest bit you see."

Well, the prince promised, but when he came into the stable and saw all the beautiful bits, he thought he had promised too much, so he took the brightest he could find; it shone like gold. Instantly, the troll came out, so mad that sparks flashed from him.

"It takes a thief to catch a thief," said the prince, "but only those who are caught are hanged."

"Be that as it may," screamed the troll, "I'm going to kill you right away."

The prince was sure he ought to spare his life.

"Well," said the troll, "if you can get me back the lovely maiden whom my nearest neighbor has stolen from me, then I'll let you go."



Drawing by Th. Kittelsen

Then all three trolls burst into a loud fit of laughter

The Golden Bird

"But where does she live?" asked the king's son.

"Oh, she lives three hundred miles beyond that big mountain, so blue against the sky," said the troll.

So the king's son promised to fetch the maiden, and the troll let him go unharmed. But be sure the fox was furious when the boy met him outside.

"Now you've got yourself into a nice mess again," said the fox. "If you had only obeyed me, we should have been on the way home long ago. I have a good mind to quit you for good."

But the king's son pleaded so hard, saying he would do all the fox said if he would only stay with him, that at last the fox gave in, and they were friends once more. They made a fresh start, and after a long, long time, they came at last to the place where the lovely maiden lived.

"Well," said the fox, "you've made many fine promises, but all the same I don't dare let you go in to the troll. This time I am going myself." So in he went, and in a little while came back with the maiden, and they all returned together.

When they came back to the troll who had the horse, they took him as well as the finest bit, and when they came to the troll who had both the linden tree and the bird, they took them too, and started for home.

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After they had traveled in this way for some time, they came to a field of rye, and the fox said:

"I hear a rumbling, so now you'll have to travel alone; I am going to stay here for a while." So he wove himself a coat of rye-straw, and when he had put it on, he looked just like a preacher. In a trice all the three trolls came rushing up, thinking they would soon catch the prince and the fox.

"Have you seen any one pass this way with a lovely maiden and a horse with a golden bit and a golden bird and a gilded linden tree?" they shrieked to the fellow who stood there preaching.

"Yes, I've heard from my mother's granny that such an outfit passed this way, but that was in the good old days, when my grandmother's granny baked cookies and sold two for a cent, and gave back the cent into the bargain."

Then all the three trolls burst into a loud fit of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha!" they roared, holding on to each other. "Well, if we've been asleep as long as that," they said, "we might as well turn our noses home and go to bed." And so they all went back the same way they had come.

The fox hurried after the prince, but when they came to the city where the inn and the brothers were, the fox said:

"I don't dare cross the town for fear of the

The Golden Bird

dogs. I'll have to go round it, but now take good care that your brothers don't get hold of you."

But when the prince got into the town, he thought it a pity not to see his brothers and exchange a few words with them, so he stopped just for a minute or two.

But as soon as his brothers saw him, they came out and took from him the maiden and the horse and the bird and the linden tree and everything, and they put him into a cask which they threw into the sea, and then they started home to the palace with the maiden and the horse and the bird and the linden tree and all. But the maiden would not speak a word and grew pale and forlorn, the horse became so thin and weak that he could scarcely stand, the bird would not sing and no longer shone, and the linden tree withered away.

In the meanwhile the fox skulked outside the city waiting for the prince and the maiden and wondering why they did not come. He paced to and fro and waited and pondered and at last came down to the shore, and there he saw the cask drifting about. So he cried:

"Are you driven about there, you empty cask?"

"Oh, it is I," cried the prince, from inside the cask.

So the fox swam as fast as he could until he got hold of the cask and pushed it ashore. He

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gnawed the hoops until he had gotten them off, and then he called to the prince:

“Kick and stamp!”

The prince kicked and stamped and struck out so that all the staves burst apart, and out he jumped from the cask. So they went on together to the palace, and when they arrived, the maiden grew lovely, the horse became so sleek and fat that every hair glistened, the bird shone and sang, and the linden tree began to bloom and its leaves to sparkle, and the princess said:

“There is the fellow who saved us!”

They planted the linden tree in the garden, and the youngest prince won the princess—for she was one, of course—but as for the two older brothers, they were each put in a cask full of nails and rolled off a steep mountain.

Then the wedding was prepared. But first the fox bade the prince put his head upon the block and chop it off. For all the prince begged and scolded to get out of it, it was of no avail, he had to do it. Just as he chopped, the fox turned into a beautiful prince, who was brother of the princess whom they had saved from the troll.

So the wedding was celebrated, and it was so grand and splendid that the fame of it has come down even to our time.

Three Lemons

ONCE upon a time there were three brothers who had lost their parents, and as the parents had left them nothing, the lads were obliged to go out into the world to try their luck. The two elder fitted themselves out as best they could, but the youngest, whom they called Taper Tom, because he always sat in the chimney corner holding tapers of pine wood, they did not want to take along. They set out in the gray dawn, but whether they went fast or not at all, Taper Tom was always at the palace just as soon as they. As soon as they arrived there, they asked for work. The king said he had none to offer, but since they were so needy, he guessed he would have to find them something—there must always be some little thing to do on such a big place. They might drive nails into the wall, and when they had done that, they might pull them out again. When they had finished that, they might carry wood and water into the kitchen for the cook. Taper Tom was handiest at driving nails into the wall and pulling them out again, and he was the best, too, at carrying wood and water. So the brothers became jealous of him and said that he had given out he could get the king the prettiest princess to be found in twelve kingdoms. For the king had lost his

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queen and become a widower. When the king heard this, he told Taper Tom that he must make good what he had said; if he could not do it, the king would have them lay him on the block and chop off his head.

Taper Tom answered that he had neither said nor thought of any such thing, but since the king was so severe, he would have to try. So he slung a lunch-bag over his shoulder and started off. But he had not gone far into the woods before he grew hungry and wanted to taste the food which they had provided him with at the palace. Just as he had about settled down in peace and comfort under a fir tree by the roadside, an old hag came limping along and asked him what he had in his bag. "Fresh meat and salt meat," said the lad; "if you are hungry, why, come and have a bite with me, granny." So she thanked him and ate and said she would surely do him a good turn in her time, and then she hobbled off into the woods.

After Taper Tom had eaten his fill, he threw the bag over his shoulder and set out again. He had not gone far before he found a whistle. This he thought it might be fun to keep and blow on the way, and you may be sure it was not long before he got a sound out of it. Suddenly there came a swarm of small trolls, who cried, one on top of the other, "What are my

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master's commands? What are my master's commands?"

Taper Tom said he knew nothing about being their master, but if he were to command them, then he wished they would get him the prettiest princess to be found in twelve kingdoms. Well, the little trolls thought that was easy. They knew very well where she was, and they could show him the way so he could go and take her himself, for they had no power to touch her. They showed him the way, and he got to the end of his journey sound and well. There was not any one who laid as much as two crossed sticks in his way. He came to an enchanted palace, and in it sat three lovely princesses. But when Taper Tom came in, they became so frightened that they ran about like scared lambs, and all at once they turned into three lemons that lay on the window sill. Taper Tom was so worried and unhappy at this that he did not know where or how to turn. When he had reflected a little, he took the lemons and put them in his pocket. He thought they might be good to have if he should become thirsty by the way, for he had heard that lemons were sour.

When he had gotten a bit on the way, he became very hot and thirsty. Water was nowhere to be found, and he did not know what to do to quench his thirst. Then he thought of the lemons and

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took one of them out and bit a hole in it. Inside it sat a princess as far as her armpits and screamed out: "Water, water!" She said she would die if she did not get it, so the lad rushed around hunting for water as if he had lost his senses, but there was none, and he found none, and all of a sudden the princess died.

When the lad had gone a bit farther he grew still hotter and thirstier, but as he could find nothing to quench his thirst, he pulled out the second lemon and bit a hole in it. Inside of it sat also a princess up to her armpits, and she was lovelier than the first. She, too, screamed for water and said that if she did not get it she would die within the hour. Taper Tom rushed around and hunted under both stones and moss, but he found no water, and so that princess died, too.

Taper Tom thought things were getting worse and worse, which they certainly were, for the farther he went, the hotter it grew. The earth was so dry and scorched that not a drop of water was to be found, and the lad was just about half dead of thirst. For a long time he could not bear to bite a hole in the only lemon left, but at last there was nothing else to be done. When he had bitten the hole, there, too, sat a princess inside. She was the loveliest in twelve kingdoms, and she screamed that if she did not get water she would

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die within the hour. Taper Tom ran to fetch water, and this time he met the king's miller, and he showed him the way to the mill pond. When he came to the mill pond with the princess and had given her water, she came entirely out of the lemon and was stark naked. So Taper Tom had to give her his coat to throw around her, after which she hid in a tree, while he went up to the palace to get clothes for her and to tell the king that he had found her and how it had all come about.

While this was going on, the cook came down to the mill pond to fetch water. When she saw the pretty face reflected in the water she thought it was her own, and she became so happy that she began to jump and dance because she had grown so beautiful! "The devil carry water, and not you who are so beautiful," she cried, throwing away the bucket. But in a little while she saw that the face in the pond belonged to a princess who sat up in the tree. Then she grew so angry that she hauled her down from the tree and threw her out into the pond. But Taper Tom's coat she threw around herself and climbed up into the tree.

When the king came and saw the ugly black kitchen slut, he turned both red and white, but when he heard them say she was the loveliest in twelve kingdoms, he felt that there must be something in it. He pitied Taper Tom, too, who had

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gone through so much before he got her. "I suppose she'll improve with time," he thought, "when she has had a chance to tidy up and put on fine clothes." So he took her home with him.

They sent after wig-makers and seamstresses, and she was decked out and dressed like a princess, but for all that they washed and dressed her, she remained as ugly and black as ever.

After a while the kitchen maid went down to the pond for water, and there she caught a large silver fish in her bucket. She carried it up and showed it to the king, and he thought it shiny and fine, but the ugly princess said there must be some witchcraft, and they must burn it up, for she understood at once what it was. Well, the fish was burned, and the next morning they found a lump of silver in the ashes. The cook came and told this to the king, and he thought it passing strange, but the princess said again it was nothing but witchcraft and begged them to bury it deep in the manure pit. The king was against it, but as she gave him neither peace nor quiet, he at last consented. But the next morning a beautiful great linden tree had sprung up there where they had buried the lump of silver, and the linden had leaves which glittered like silver. When they told this to the king, he thought it very strange, but the princess said it was nothing but witchcraft, and they must

Three Lemons

cut down the linden tree right away. The king was very reluctant, but the princess kept on teasing him till he was at last obliged to let her have her way again. When the girls went out to gather the linden chips to light the fires, they were pure silver. "It is not worth while to say anything about this to the king or the princess," said one of them, "for then these, too, will have to be burned or melted. We had better save them in our chests. They'll be good to have when the right person comes along and we are going to marry!" Well, they agreed upon that. But after they had carried the chips a while they grew fearfully heavy, and when they looked to see what was the matter, they found the chips had turned into a child, and it was not long before she was the loveliest princess you ever set eyes on. The girls could understand that here was something queer. They fetched her clothes and rushed off after the lad who was to get the loveliest princess in twelve kingdoms and told him about it. When Taper Tom arrived, the princess explained to him how it all had happened, how the cook had thrown her into the pond, and she had been both the silver fish and the lump of silver and the linden tree and the chips, and that she was the true princess. It was not so easy to get hold of the king, for the ugly black cook hung around him early and late—but at last

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they thought of saying that war had been declared by a neighboring king. So they got the king out, and when he saw the lovely princess, he was so delighted with her that he wanted to have the wedding feast that very hour, and when he heard how awfully she had been treated by the ugly black cook, he said that she was to be taken and rolled around in a cask of nails. Then they celebrated their wedding so that it was talked of over twelve kingdoms.

The Three Aunts

ONCE upon a time, there lived a poor man who dwelt in a hut deep in the forest and got his living by hunting. He had an only daughter who was both beautiful and kind. She had lost her mother in her childhood, and when she was almost grown up she told her father that she wanted to leave home and find a place where she could try to earn her own living.

"Well, my child," said the father, "in fact you have learned nothing with me except to pluck and roast a bird. All the same, I suppose you had better try to earn your daily bread."

So the girl set out to find a job, and after traveling a while, she came to the king's palace. There she stayed, and the queen grew so fond of her that the other handmaidens became quite jealous. At last they hit on telling the queen, who thought so much of all kinds of needle-work, that the girl had boasted she could spin a pound of flax in twenty-four hours.

"Well, if you have said so, you'll have to prove it," said the queen, "though I shan't hold you strictly to the time."

The poor girl dared not say that she had never spun in her whole life, but only begged to have a room to herself. This was granted, and both

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spinning-wheel and flax were carried into it. There she sat down and cried, for she did not know for the life of her what to do. She fussed with the spinning-wheel, turning it around, first one way and then the other, for never having seen one before, she had not the faintest idea how to proceed.

As she sat there in her misery, an old woman came into the room.

"What is the matter with you, my child?" she asked.

"Oh!" answered the girl, "I can't think there's any use my telling you about it, for you can't help me."

"You never can tell," said the old woman; "perhaps I'd know a way out of it all the same."

"Oh, I suppose I might as well tell her," thought the girl, so she told her how the others had said she had boasted she could spin a pound of flax in twenty-four hours. "I—poor wretch—who've never laid my eyes on a spinning-wheel! Tell me, how am I to do all this in twenty-four hours?"

"Well, never you mind, my child," said the old woman. "If you'll call me 'auntie' on your wedding-day, I'll do the spinning, and you creep into bed and go to sleep."

To this the girl gladly agreed and went off to bed.

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When she awoke in the morning, there lay the flax on the table, all spun. It was so fine and perfect that no one had ever seen such an even thread before. The queen was so delighted with the beautiful yarn that she was fonder than ever of the girl.

When the other handmaidens saw this, they were even more jealous than before, so they decided to tell the queen that the girl now said she could weave in twenty-four hours the thread she had spun. Once more the queen said if she had really said so, she would have to prove it, but she would not bind her to exactly twenty-four hours.

The girl dared not deny it this time, either, but only asked for a room to herself, as she would have to do her best.

There she sat once more, weeping and worrying and wondering what on earth to do, when an old woman again came into the room and asked her:

"What's the matter with you, my child?"

At first the girl would not come out with it, but finally she told her why she was so unhappy.

"Oh, never mind," answered the woman, "if you'll call me 'auntie' on your wedding-day, I'll do your weaving, and you can creep into bed and go to sleep."

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The girl did not have to be told twice, but went right to bed.

When she awoke, there lay the roll of cloth on the table, all beautifully and evenly woven. She hurried down to the queen with it, and she was so delighted that she thought even more of the girl than before.

But as for the handmaidens, they were even more jealous than ever and did nothing but wonder what new story they might now invent to do the girl harm.

At last they told the queen that she had boasted she could make the roll of cloth into shirts in twenty-four hours.

Well, everything happened just as before. The girl did not dare to say that she did not know how to sew. She went up to a room all by herself, and, as she was sitting there crying and nearly out of her mind, an old woman appeared once more and promised to do the sewing, if only she would call her "auntie" on her wedding-day. The girl was only too happy to promise this and did as the old woman told her, hopped into bed, and went to sleep.

When she awoke in the morning, she found the cloth lying on the table all made into shirts. She had never seen such lovely garments, all marked and ready to wear.

The Three Aunts

When the queen saw the work, she was so delighted that she clapped her hands with joy.

"No one has ever seen such beautiful sewing," she said, and from that time she loved the girl as if she were her own daughter.

"If you want the prince, you may have him," she said to the girl, "for you will never need any help when you can spin and weave all by yourself."

As the girl was beautiful, and the prince liked her, they were married at once.

No sooner had the prince sat down to the wedding feast with her than in came an ugly old woman with a long nose—it must have been two yards long!

The bride rose and said, as she courtesied, "How do you do, auntie?"

"Is that my bride's aunt?" asked the prince.

Yes, so she was.

"Well, then, I suppose she had better be seated at the table." But he and all the other guests thought she was a terrible sight to sit down with.

In a few minutes, in came another ugly old woman, so big and fat that she could just squeeze in through the door. The bride rose at once and greeted her, saying: "How do you do, auntie?"

Again the prince asked if she could be his bride's aunt.

They both answered yes, so the prince said

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that if such were the case, she, too, had better be seated at the table.

Hardly had she sat down, when a third ugly old woman entered with horrible running, red eyes, as big as saucers.

Once more the bride arose and greeted her, saying, "How do you do, auntie?"

The prince asked her to be seated at the table, but he did not like it and thought to himself:

"The Lord preserve me from aunts like my wife's!"

After a little while, he could contain himself no longer and asked:

"How on earth can my bride, who is so lovely, have such ugly, misshapen aunts?"

"I'll tell you," said one of them. "I was just as lovely as your bride when I was her age, but I got such a long nose from having to sit bent over and nodding at my spinning. It has grown steadily longer until it's what you now see."

"And I," said the second one, "ever since I was young, have had to sit shoving back and forth on the weaving bench, and that has made my back so big and swollen."

And the third one said, "Ever since I was a very little girl, I've had to sit sewing night and day, and that's the reason why my eyes are so big and horrible, and there's no curing them now."

The Three Aunts

“Is that so?” said the prince. “Well, I’m glad I found this out, for if people grow so horrible and ugly from spinning and weaving and sewing, my bride shall never spin nor weave nor sew again as long as she lives.”

Soria Moria Castle

THERE was once a couple who had a son named Halvor. From the time he was a little boy, he would never do anything but sit by the fireplace poking the ashes. His parents found him all kinds of work, but Halvor would not stick to anything. When he had been in a place only a few days, he would come running back home, sit down by the fireplace, and begin digging in the ashes again. Finally, one day, a skipper turned up who asked Halvor if he did not want to go to sea and visit foreign lands. Yes, that was just what Halvor would like, and it did not take him long to get ready.

I do not know how far they had sailed, but they had been a long while at sea when a terrible storm arose, and after it had passed and the sea was calm again, they had lost their bearings and found themselves drifting towards an unknown shore.

As it was so calm that not even a leaf stirred, the boat lay motionless, and Halvor asked the skipper if he might go ashore and look about, for he would much rather walk around, he said, than lie abed.

"Do you think you're fit to be seen?" asked the skipper. "Why, you've no other clothes than the rags you have on."

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Halvor would not give up, and at last was told he might go, but he had to promise to return as soon as the wind sprang up.

On coming ashore he found himself in a lovely country of broad plains with farms and meadows, but he did not see a living soul. Now the wind sprang up, but Halvor did not feel he had seen enough and wanted to go a little farther on to see if he could not find some people.

After a while he struck a wide road, so even that you could have rolled an egg on it, and following this he saw towards dusk a great castle in the distance, its windows ablaze with light.

He had been walking all day long, and as he had taken but little food with him, he was reasonably hungry, but despite this, the nearer he came to the castle the more scared he was at the thought of entering it.

Halvor could see there was a good fire burning inside the castle, and he went into the kitchen, which was far finer than any he had ever seen. The utensils were all of gold and silver, but not a living being was there.

When he had waited about for a while, and no one appeared, he opened one of the doors, and there sat a princess beside a spinning-wheel.

"Oh, my! oh, my!" she cried, "does a Christian dare come here? You must hurry away, or

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the troll will eat you; a troll with three heads lives here!"

"I don't care if he has four, I'd like to see the fellow," said the boy. "I won't go, for I've done nothing wrong, but I wish you would give me something to eat, for I'm awfully hungry."

When Halvor had eaten his fill, the princess told him to try to swing the sword which hung on the wall, but no! he could not even take it down, much less swing it.

"Well," said the princess, "then you'll have to take a swallow from the bottle hanging there beside it, for that's what the troll does whenever he's going out to use the sword."

No sooner had Halvor taken a drink than the sword was light as a feather in his hands. Then he thought, just let that troll come!

Suddenly, like a blast, came the giant! In a jiffy Halvor was behind the door!

"Ho-ho, I smell the blood of a Christian man!" said the troll, as he stuck his head inside the door.

"You'll soon know it for sure!" said Halvor, and he chopped off all the three heads.

The princess was so overjoyed at being saved that she danced, and she sang. Then suddenly she thought of her sisters, and said:

"Oh! how I wish my sisters could be saved, too!"

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Where are they?" asked Halvor.

So she told him that one of them had been shut up by a troll in a castle six miles off, and another was kept prisoner by a troll who lived nine miles beyond that.

"But, now," she said, "you must first help me to get out this carcass!"

Halvor was so strong, he swashed away and cleaned it all up in a trice.

After that he just took his ease until the next morning, when he started off at daybreak. He was ready for anything now, and he walked and ran the whole day long. When he caught sight of the palace, he was a little scared, for it was much grander than the other, nor was there a soul to be seen anywhere about. Halvor walked into the kitchen, but he did not stop there and went straight on.

"My goodness; does a Christian dare to enter here?" cried the princess. "I don't know how long I've been here, but in all that time I have not seen a single Christian soul. You must run for your life, for a troll lives here who has six heads!"

"No! I'm not going!" said Halvor, "not even if he had six more."

"He'll eat you alive," said the princess.

It was of no use, Halvor would not go, for he

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was not afraid of the troll, but food and drink he wanted right away, for he was hungry after his journey.

Well, he got all he wanted, but then the princess again begged him to go.

"No," said Halvor, "I won't go, for I've done no harm, and I've done nothing to be afraid of."

"He won't ask for that," said the princess. "He'll just grab you without law or right. But since you won't leave, just try and see if you can wield the sword the troll uses when he goes to battle."

He could not do it, so the princess told him to take a drink out of the bottle hanging beside it. When he had done this, he could wield the sword.

Suddenly, there was the troll, so huge and big that he had to stand sideways to get in through the door.

As soon as he had stuck his first head in, he cried out:

"Ho-ho! I smell the blood of a Christian man!"

Instantly Halvor chopped off the first head and then all the others. The princess was ready to dance for joy until she thought of her sisters; then she longed to have them, too, delivered. Halvor thought that would be easy work, and he wanted to start off at once, but first he had to help

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the princess carry out the troll's body. The next morning he was on his way.

As the castle was a long distance off, he ran a good part of the way to get there in time. Towards evening he caught sight of it and saw that it was a far grander castle than either of the others. This time Halvor was scarcely frightened at all, but went boldly through the kitchen into the next room.

There sat a princess lovelier than any maiden you have ever laid your eyes on. Like the others, she told him that no Christian had been near the place for years, and besought him to leave, if he did not want the troll to eat him alive. "He has nine heads," she said.

"Well, if he had nine heads and still another nine I wouldn't budge," said Halvor, walking over to the stove.

The princess kept on imploring him to go, but Halvor merely said:

"Let him come whenever he wants to."

So she gave him the troll's sword and bade him take a drink from the bottle so that he could swing it.

Suddenly the troll strode in with a great racket. He was even more enormous than the other two and also had to crawl sideways to get in through the door.

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"Ho-ho! I smell the blood of a Christian man!" he roared.

In a trice Halvor cut off the first head and then all the others. The last head was so tough that Halvor found chopping it off the hardest job he had ever had.

Now the other princesses came to this castle, and they were happier than they had ever been in all their lives. All three of them were fond of Halvor, and he of them, and he could have whichever he liked best, but the youngest cared most for him.

After a while Halvor began to grow restless and moved about in such a queer, quiet way, so that the princesses asked him what was the matter, and if he did not like living there with them.

Well, he told them he certainly liked it very much, for he had every comfort and luxury, but he was homesick for his parents, who were still alive, and he longed to see them again. The princesses said this could be easily arranged.

"If you follow our advice you can go home and come back again, and no harm shall befall you," said the princesses.

Halvor promised to do as he was told, whereupon they clothed him as fine as a prince and put a ring on his finger. With this ring on he need only wish to find himself at home and back again.

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They warned him to be sure not to lose it and never to mention their names. If he did, that would be the end of all their happiness, and he would never see them more.

"How I wish I were home and home were here!" said Halvor

No sooner said than done. There he stood outside his parents' hut. It was in the dusk of the evening, so that when they saw such a fine, magnificent stranger they were quite bewildered and began to bow and scrape.

Halvor begged leave to stay and spend the night.

"No," they said, "that is impossible. We have far too little to offer. We lack everything that such a fine lord as you must have. You had better go up to the farm—it isn't far away. You can see the chimney from here. There they have everything.'

Halvor did not care for that; he wanted to stay. The parents, however, insisted that he should go up to the farm where he would find good things to eat and drink, while they had not so much as a chair to offer him.

"No," said Halvor, "I don't want to go up there until early to-morrow morning. Do let me stay here. I can sit by the open fire."

They could not refuse this, so Halvor sat down

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by the fire and began poking the ashes, just as he used to do when he idled his time away at home.

They talked about everything under the sun and told Halvor a great deal of gossip. Finally, he asked them if they had never had a child.

"Yes," they said, "we had a son named Halvor, but we don't know what has become of him or whether he is dead or alive."

"Don't you think I might be he?" asked Halvor.

"I'm quite sure you're not," said the old woman. "Halvor was so idle and lazy that he wouldn't do anything, and his clothes were in rags and tatters. He could never turn into such a fine fellow as you are."

After a while the old woman went over to stir up the fire. The blaze lit up Halvor's face, as he sat there poking the ashes just as in the old days, and she recognized him.

"Well, I declare—if you aren't Halvor!" cried the old woman, whereupon both she and the old father went quite wild with joy. He had to tell them all that had befallen him, and his mother wanted him to go to the farm right away, so that she could show him off to the girls who had always given themselves such airs.

She went ahead, and Halvor followed after. She was no sooner there than she told them of Halvor's return and, "Oh! you must just wait and

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see what a fine fellow he is! Why," she said, "he looks just like a prince!"

"One thing we know," said the girls tossing their heads, "he is the same ragamuffin that he always was."

Now came Halvor himself, and the girls were so excited that they forgot their waists, which were hanging near the fire where they had been dressing, and rushed out half dressed. When they came back, they were so ashamed they scarcely dared look at Halvor whom they had despised before.

"Well, you've always thought yourselves so grand and beautiful that no one could come up to you. You should just see the eldest of the princesses whom I've saved," said Halvor. "You look like herd-girls compared to her. The second princess is even prettier, and as for the youngest, she's my sweetheart. She is more beautiful than the sun or moon. How I wish they were here, so you could see for yourselves!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when there they stood. Halvor, however, was terribly upset, for now he remembered what he had promised them. The farm people made a feast for the princesses and showed them great honor, but still they would not stay.



Drawing by Eric Wernskold

The Princesses wanted to sit and rest a while on the lovely green hillside

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"We want to go to your parents with you," they told Halvor, "and then we would like to look about a little." So Halvor went with them down to the lake just outside the farm. A lovely green hillside sloped down to the edge, and here the princesses wanted to rest a while—they thought it would be charming to sit and look out over the water.

So there they sat, and after a while the youngest princess said:

"Don't you want to rest your head a little, Halvor?"

Halvor laid his head in her lap, and while she was stroking it, he fell asleep. Then she took the ring off his finger, and after she had put another in its place, she said:

"Be true to me as I to you, and now I wish we were in Soria Moria Castle!"

When Halvor awoke he quickly understood he had lost the princesses. He wept and wailed and could not be comforted. Though his parents pleaded with him, he would not stay, but bade them good-bye, saying he might never see them again, for if he did not find the princesses, life would not be worth having.

Halvor had three hundred dollars left, which he put in his pocket as he started off. He had gone a piece when he met a man with a good horse

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which was just what Halvor wanted, so he began to bargain with him.

"Well, I had not thought of selling it," said the man, "but if we could only agree on the price——"

So Halvor asked him how much he wanted for it.

"I didn't pay much for it, and it isn't worth much," said the man. "It's a good riding horse, but not equal to drawing loads. It will always carry you and your knapsack, if you take it easy."

They finally agreed on the price, and Halvor laid his knapsack on the horse and started off at a walk and later trotted a bit. In the evening he came to a green field where he sat down under a big tree. He turned the horse loose, but before going to sleep took some food from his knapsack. As soon as it was light he started off again, for he had no peace of mind. The whole day went in riding and walking through a great forest in which there were many lovely green glades shimmering through the trees. He neither knew where he was nor whither he was bound, and only rested just enough to give the horse time to graze, and to open his knapsack when he reached one of the green clearings. He rode and walked on and on, but there never seemed an end to the forest.

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Towards dusk on the second day, Halvor saw a light shining through the trees.

"How I wish some one was up, so I could get something warm inside me!" thought Halvor.

When he arrived he found a miserable little hut, and through the window he could see an old couple inside. They were very old and had hair as gray as a dove, and the old woman's nose was so long she used it as a poker in the fireplace.

"Good evening," said Halvor.

"Good evening," answered the old woman. "What's your errand here? No Christian has been here for over a hundred years."

Halvor told them that he was bound for Soria Moria Castle and asked if they could tell him the way.

"No," said the old woman, "but the moon will soon be up, and I'll ask her, for she must see it when she shines on everything."

When the moon stood bright and shining above the tree tops, the old woman went out and cried:

"Moon! oh, moon! can you tell me the way to Soria Moria Castle?"

"No," said the moon, "I can't do that, for a cloud must have hidden it when I was shining thereabouts."

"Wait a bit," said the old woman to Halvor. "In a minute the west wind will be here, and he'll

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probably know, for he blows in every crook and cranny."

"Oh, my! Oh, my! Have you got a horse, too?" said the old woman, when she came out again. "Don't keep the poor beast starving here by the door, but turn him out into the paddock. How would you like to swap him? We have an old pair of boots here," she continued, "in which you can take fifteen leagues with every step. You can have them in exchange for the horse, and you'll get all the sooner to Soria Moria Castle."

Halvor was quite willing to swap, and the old woman danced for joy at getting the horse.

"Now I, too, can ride to church," she said.

Halvor, who was as restless as ever, wanted to leave at once, but the old woman told him there was no hurry.

"Lie down on the bench," she said, "and sleep a little. We haven't a bed to offer you. I'll keep watch till the west wind comes."

All of a sudden the west wind came roaring and whistling, till the walls creaked and groaned. The woman hurried out.

"West wind, oh, west wind!" she cried, "can you tell me the way to Soria Moria Castle? There's a fellow here who's going there."

"Yes, I know the road well," said the west wind. "I am just on my way there to dry the clothes in

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time for the wedding they are going to have. If he'll hurry up, he can come with me."

Halvor did not lose a minute.

"You'll have to hustle to keep up with me," said the west wind, and off they flew, over hill and dale and mountain and meadow, and Halvor had a hard time keeping up with the wind.

"Well, I've no more time to waste with you," said the west wind, "for I've got to tear down some fir trees before I go to the bleaching yard to dry the clothes. If you follow the brow of the hill you'll soon come to some girls washing clothes, and then you aren't far from Soria Moria Castle."

A little later Halvor came to the girls who stood washing. They asked him if he had seen anything of the west wind, who should be on his way there to dry the clothes for the wedding.

"Yes," said Halvor, "he's just tearing down a clump of firs—he'll be over here in a minute!" Then he asked them the road to Soria Moria Castle.

They started him on his way, and when he reached the castle, the courtyard was swarming with horses and people. Halvor was all torn to tatters by the brambles and thickets through which he had followed the west wind, so he kept out of sight and did not venture in until dinner time on the night before the wedding.

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Now, when, according to the good old custom, they were to drink to the health of the bride, and the master of ceremonies had to drink to every one—bride, bridegroom, knights, and esquires—he came at last to Halvor. He answered the toast, but as he did so he dropped into the glass the ring which the princess had slipped on his finger as they lay beside the lake, and begged the master of ceremonies to greet the bride for him and take her the glass.

The princess rose at once from the table.

"Who has most of all deserved to wed one of us," she cried, "he who has saved us or this bridegroom?"

There was only one opinion as to that, and, when Halvor heard it, he got off his rags in a hurry and dressed himself like a bridegroom.

The minute she saw him, the youngest princess cried:

"Yes, he's the right one!" and she turned her back on the other fellow, and Halvor took the place by her side.

Faithful and Faithless

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers, one named Faithful and the other Faithless. Faithful was always good and honest, but Faithless was bad and such a liar that no one could ever believe a word he said. Their mother was a widow and had so little to live on that the boys were obliged to leave as soon as they were grown up and go out into the world to earn their living. To each of them the mother gave a knapsack filled with food, and off they went.

They walked the whole day long, and toward evening sat down on a windbreak in the forest and opened their knapsacks, for they were hungry after their long tramp and thought a bite of food would go to the right spot.

"If you agree," said Faithless, "we'll eat your food first, and when there's nothing left in your knapsack we'll take hold of mine."

This seemed all right to Faithful, so they began to eat.

Faithless picked out and gobbled up all the tidbits, while Faithful got only crusts, bits of scorched meat, and scraps of fat. The next morning they ate Faithful's food again, and also for lunch, and then his knapsack was empty.

When they had walked all the next day and

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were to have their evening meal, Faithful wanted some of the food in his brother's knapsack, but Faithless said No, that food belonged to him, and there was no more than he needed for himself.

"But I shared mine with you," said Faithful, "just as long as there was any left."

"Well, if you're such a fool as to let others eat your food, you'll have to take the consequences," said Faithless. "So now you can sit there and slobber for all I care!"

"Faithless is your name, and faithless you are and have been your whole life long," said Faithful.

Faithless was so enraged at this that he rushed at his brother and put out both his eyes.

"Now, see if people are faithful or faithless, you blind ninny," he sneered as he left him.

Poor Faithful now tried to grope his way through the thick forest. Blind and all alone, he did not know what to do. At last he got hold of a great linden tree, and it occurred to him he could climb up and sit in the branches and be safe from the wild beasts during the night.

"I'll know it's morning when the birds begin to sing, and then I must try to grope along farther," he thought, as he crept up into the linden tree.

He had been sitting there a while when he heard footsteps approaching, and then it sounded as if some one were cooking and preparing things under

Faithful and Faithless

the tree. Soon others arrived, and as they greeted each other he heard that they were the bear, the wolf, the fox, and the hare, who had gathered there to celebrate Midsummer Night. They had a fine supper together, and then they sat down to talk.

The fox began: "Supposing we each tell a little story while we are sitting here."

They all thought this was a good idea and would be fun, so the bear began—for he was the most important one:

"The King of England has such poor eyesight," said the bear, "he can scarcely see the weather-cock. If only he would climb up into the linden tree in the early morning, while the dew is still on the leaves, and drop some of it into his eyes, he'd get his sight back as good as it ever was."

"Yes," said the wolf, "and the King of England has a deaf-and-dumb daughter, too, but if he knew what I know, he'd soon cure her. Last year when she went to communion, she dropped a bread crumb, and a big frog tried to swallow it. If they would only rip up the church floor, they'd find that toad living right under the altar rail with the bread crumb still sticking in his throat. If they slit open the toad, took the bread crumb out, and let the princess swallow it, she would hear and speak just as well as any one else."

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"Well, well," said the fox, "if the King of England only knew what I know, he'd have no trouble getting water in his palace. There's the clearest well-water any one could wish for under the big rock in the middle of his yard. If he only knew enough to dig in the right place!"

"Well," said the hare, "the King of England has the loveliest orchard in the whole country, but it doesn't bear so much as a green apple, for a big gold chain is wound thrice around the garden. If he'd have the chain dug up, he'd have the finest orchard in England."

"The night is pretty far spent," said the fox. "We had better be thinking of going home," whereupon they all left.

When they had gone, Faithful fell fast asleep sitting where he was up in the linden tree. When the birds began to sing in the morning, he awoke and took the dew from the leaves and dropped it into his eyes, whereupon he could see just as well as before Faithless had put them out.

Now he went straight to the King of England's castle and asked for a job, and that he got at once.

One day the king came out into the yard, and when he had been walking about for a while, he wanted a drink from his pump, for it was a hot day, and he had grown thirsty. When they drew

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the water, it was so sticky and so full of mud and dirt that the king became very angry.

"I don't believe there is a man in my whole kingdom who has worse water on his place than I have, and at that I have to bring it a long way over mountains and valleys," said the king.

"Well, if you'll only let me have the help I need to dig up the big rock here in the middle of your courtyard I could get you plenty of good water," said Faithful.

The king agreed to this at once, and no sooner had they dug up the rock than a clear stream of water spouted high into the air. The stream was as thick as if it came out of a barrel tap, and no clearer water was to be found in all England.

One day soon after this, when the king again came down into the yard, a big hawk swooped down on his chickens, and all the people began clapping their hands and shouting: "There he flies, there he flies!" The king snatched his gun and took aim, but he could not see as far as the hawk. Then he was quite in despair.

"I wish to heaven some one could do something to cure my eyes!" said the king. "I think I shall soon be stone blind."

"Why, I'll tell you what to do," said Faithful, and then he told the king what he had done, and you may be sure the king hurried to the linden

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tree that very same evening, and he was cured just as soon as he had dropped the morning dew from the leaves into his eyes.

After that there was no one the king was so fond of as Faithful. He had to be at his master's side wherever he went or stood, both at home and abroad.

One day when they were strolling about together in the garden, the king said:

"I don't understand it. There's not a man in England who spends as much on his garden as I do, and yet I can't make a tree bear so much as a piece of green fruit."

"Well," said Faithful, "if you'll only let me have what goes round your garden three times and people to dig it up, then your trees will bear plenty of fruit."

To this the king willingly agreed. Faithful got the people to help him dig, and at last they took up the whole golden chain.

This made Faithful a mighty rich man, much, much richer than the king himself. The king, however, was well content, for the trees were so laden with fruit that the branches were weighted down to the ground, and no one had ever tasted such luscious apples and pears.

Another day when the king and Faithful were strolling about chatting together, the princess

Faithful and Faithless

passed them, and when the king saw her he became very sorrowful.

"Isn't it a pity that such a lovely princess as mine shouldn't be able to hear nor to speak?" he said to Faithful.

"Yes, but there's a remedy for that," said Faithful.

The king was so glad when he heard this that he promised Faithful the hand of the princess and half the kingdom if he could really cure her.

Faithful got a couple of men to help him in the church, and they dug up the toad who was squatting under the altar rail. They cut him open, took out the bread crumb, and gave it to the princess, who could instantly hear and see just like other people.

Now Faithful was to marry the princess, and such preparations were made for the wedding that they were the talk of the whole kingdom.

While they were dancing at the wedding, a poor boy turned up begging for a little food. He was so ragged and looked so miserable that all the people crossed themselves, but Faithful recognized him at once as his brother Faithless.

"Do you know me?" asked Faithful.

"Where should I ever have seen such a grand lord?" said Faithless.

"Well, you've seen me all the same," said

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Faithful. "You put my eyes out just one year ago to-day. Your name is Faithless, and faithless you are. I said so once, and I say it again, but you're my brother all the same, and so you shall have some food. After that you can go to the linden tree in which I sat last year, and I don't begrudge you anything you may hear which can bring you luck.

He did not have to tell this to Faithless twice.

"If sitting in a linden tree has brought Faithful such luck that he has become king of half of England inside of a year, why, then—" thought Faithless, and he started off for the linden tree and climbed up into it.

He had not been sitting there long before all the animals came and began to eat, drink, and celebrate Midsummer Night under the tree.

When they had eaten their fill, the fox suggested they should tell stories, and you may be sure Faithless pricked up his ears. But the bear, who was angry, growled and said: "Some one has been tattling about what we said last year, so now we'll keep what we know to ourselves."

So the animals said good-night, and each went off by himself, leaving Faithless no wiser than before.

That was because his name was Faithless, and that was what he was.

Kari Wooden-Skirt

THERE was once a king whose wife died, leaving him with a daughter who was so gentle and lovely that no one could be found gentler or lovelier. He mourned long for his queen, whom he had truly loved, but at last he was so tired of living alone that he married again, and this time a widowed queen who also had a daughter, but she was as ugly and unkind as the other was good and beautiful. The stepmother and her daughter were jealous of the king's daughter because she was so charming, but as long as the king was at home they dared do nothing to her, she was such a favorite of her father's.

There came a time when the king had to lead his army in a war with another king. Then the queen thought she had a chance to do as she liked, and she started to beat the king's daughter, and gave her no peace. At last she thought everything too good for her, so she set her to tend the cattle, and the girl guarded them out in the woods and on the mountain. She had hardly any food for herself, and of course she grew very pale and thin and was almost always in tears.

In the stable there was a big, gray bull, a beautiful, glossy creature who often walked up to the princess to be petted. One day, as she sat weeping

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in her misery, the bull came close up to her and asked why she was so unhappy. She gave no answer and only kept on crying.

"Oh," said the bull, "I know well enough without your telling me; you are crying because the queen treats you so badly and is trying to make you die of hunger. But you need not be anxious for food. In my left ear you can find a tablecloth; just spread it out, and you will see as many courses of food as you could wish."

She did as she was told, and when she had laid the cloth on the grass, it served delicious dishes with wine, mead, and sweet cakes, so the princess soon regained her health and became so plump and so red and white that the queen and her dried-up, raw-boned daughter grew green with jealousy just to look at her. The queen, quite unable to understand how her stepdaughter could thrive on such poor food, ordered one of the maids to follow her into the woods and watch what went on, for she was sure that some of the servants were feeding her. So the maid went after her, and soon she saw the king's daughter take the cloth from the gray bull's ear and spread it out on the ground. Then the cloth served up the finest dishes, and the princess feasted on them. The maid went home and told all this to the queen.

Now the king came home, having won a victory

Kari Wooden-Skirt

over the other king whom he had been fighting, and great were the rejoicings in the whole palace, and none was happier than the king's daughter. But the queen went to bed, saying she was very ill, and she offered the doctor a great sum of money if he would only say that she could never get well unless she could eat meat of the gray bull. The king's daughter and many others asked the doctor if there was really nothing else that could help the queen, and they begged to have the bull spared, for they were all fond of him, and said there was not another to compare with him in the whole kingdom. But no! no!—he must be slaughtered, and he was going to be slaughtered, for there was nothing else to do. When the king's daughter heard this, she was quite overcome, and went down to the bull in the stable. There he stood, hanging his head and looking miserable, so she began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" asked the bull. She told him that the king had come home again, and the queen had gone to bed ill, and she had made the doctor believe she would never be well again unless they gave her meat from the gray bull, and now he was to be slaughtered.

"As soon as they have taken my life, they will kill you, too," said the bull. "If you are of my mind, we'll be off to-night."

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The king's daughter thought it very hard to leave her father, but far worse to stay in the house with the queen, so she promised the bull to go with him. That evening, when all the others were in bed, the king's daughter stole down to the bull in the stable; he took her on his back, and away they sped as fast as he could run. The next morning early, when the people came to slaughter the bull, he was gone, and when the king was dressed and asked for his daughter, she was away, too. He sent messengers in every direction to find her, and the two were cried from the church hill, but no one had seen anything of them.

Meanwhile the bull raced through many lands with the princess on his back, until at last they came to a great copper forest; the trees, branches, leaves, flowers—all were of copper.

But before they entered the wood, the bull said to the king's daughter:

"When we are once under the trees, you must be very careful not to pull off even a leaf. If you do, it's all over with you and me, for here lives a troll with three heads who owns the whole forest."

For Heaven's sake, no! She would be so very, very careful and hardly touch a thing.

She was indeed careful, bending to one side and the other to keep clear of the branches and pushing them gently aside, but the wood was so dense that

Kari Wooden-Skirt

they could hardly get through, and spite of her utmost care, one of the leaves came off in her hand.

"Oh! oh! what have you done?" said the bull. "Now we must fight for our lives. But be sure to hold on to the leaf."

In a few minutes they were out of the forest, and there came the troll with three heads rushing up to them.

"Who is meddling with my forest?" cried the troll.

"It's just as much mine as yours," said the bull.

"We'll fight and see," shrieked the troll.

"Go ahead!" said the bull.

Then they charged at each other, and the bull gored and kicked with all his might, but the troll fought just as well, and the whole day went before the bull had won the battle, and then he was so badly wounded and so weak that he could hardly walk. They had to wait over a day, but the bull told the princess she was to take the horn that hung from the troll's belt and rub him with the salve in it. Then he recovered rapidly, and the day after they were off again.

Now they traveled on for many, many days, and at last came to a silver forest; the trees with branches, leaves, flowers, all, all was of silver.

Before entering there, the bull said to the king's daughter:

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"When we are once inside this forest, for Heaven's sake be very careful; you must not break off anything, not so much as a single leaf, for that would be the end of us both; this belongs to a troll with six heads, and I hardly think I could get the better of him."

"No," said the princess, "I will be most careful, and, above all, I won't break anything about me."

But once inside the wood, they found it so thick, so dense, that they could scarcely go on. She was as careful as she could possibly be, bending first to one side, then to the other, and she parted the branches with her hands very gently, but every moment they snapped back in her eyes. Spite of all her care, she broke off a leaf.

"Oh! oh!" said the bull, "see what you've done! Now I must fight for our lives. Here the troll has six heads and is twice as strong as the other. Just keep tight hold of the leaf."

Suddenly, there was the troll!

"Who dares touch my forest?" said he.

"It belongs to me just as much as to you," said the bull.

"We'll fight for it," screamed the troll.

"Come on!" said the bull, and made for the troll. He gored out his eyes and drove his horns right through the troll's intestines, so they ran out, but still the troll could fight on as well as ever,

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and it was three long days before the bull had killed him. Then the bull was so spent and so miserable that he could hardly move, and blood was running from all his wounds. Again he begged the princess to take salve from the horn hanging from the troll's belt and rub him with it. That she did, and he slowly recovered, but they had to rest a whole week before the bull was able to go on.

At last they started off again, but the bull was still weak, and they made little progress at first. The princess, who was young and light of foot, wished to walk and save the bull's strength, but that he would not allow; she had to seat herself on his back again.

Now they traveled a long, long way and through many countries, and the king's daughter did not know whither they were going, but at last they came to a golden forest; the trees with their branches, leaves, and flowers were of pure gold, and gold dripped from them to the ground beneath.

Here the same thing happened as in the copper and silver forests. The bull warned the princess to lay no careless finger on anything, for this wood was owned by a troll with nine heads, much bigger and stronger than the other two together, and the bull was sure he was no match for him.

The princess assured him that she would take

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the greatest care in the world and touch the leaves with gentlest hand. But as they entered the forest, they found it denser than the silver forest, and it grew worse and worse as they went on. The trees stood nearer and nearer together, and, as they were shut in closer and closer, they knew not how to move at all. The princess was so afraid that she might break off something that she sat still or bent back between the branches, parting them most deftly with her finger-tips, but they kept snapping into her eyes so that she could not see where she put her hands, and at last a golden apple lay in one of them. She was so terribly frightened that she began to cry, and was just going to throw the apple away, when the bull told her to keep it and said all he could to comfort her, although he knew a dreadful bout was ahead, and he felt doubtful how it would go.

Suddenly, there was the troll with nine heads, such a frightful object that the princess hardly dared look at him.

"Who has dared touch my forest?" he roared.

"It is just as much mine as yours," said the bull.

"We'll fight and see," shrieked the troll.

"All right," said the bull.

Without more words, the fight began, and the king's daughter almost fainted at what she saw. The bull gored out the troll's eyes and drove his

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horns right through his body; but the troll fought terribly, and when the bull had gored one head to death, the other heads blew fresh life into it, and it took a whole week to kill them all. But then the bull was so weak and racked with pain that he lay motionless—he was covered with wounds, and too exhausted even to ask the princess to rub him with the salve from the troll's horn; she knew enough to do it now without asking, and that brought him back to life, but three whole weeks they stayed there resting before the bull was able to go on.

Then they started along at an easy pace, keeping their way by wooded mountain ridges, until they were near the top.

"Do you see anything?" asked the bull.

"No," answered the princess, "I see only the sky."

As they came higher up, they found themselves on more open, level land where they had a better view all around.

"Do you see anything now?" said the bull.

"Yes, I see a small palace, far, far away," the princess answered.

"Oh! it's not so very small," said the bull.

A long while after they came to a high ridge with very steep sides.

"What do you see now?" asked the bull.

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"Now we are close up to the palace, and it looks much, much larger," she answered.

"That's where you are going," he said. "Just below the palace there is a pig-sty where you are to stay. There you will find a wooden skirt which you must put on, and then go right up to the palace and say that your name is Kari Wooden-skirt and you want work. But first you are to take your little knife and cut off my head. Then peel off my skin, roll it up, lay inside it the copper and silver leaves and the golden apple, and thrust it into the mountain cleft there. Near by lies a stick. Whenever you want anything of me, just knock on the mountain wall right here."

At first she would not do as he wished, but when he said it was the only return she could make for all he had done for her, she no longer refused. She felt it was terrible, but she toiled with the knife and cut deep down into the great creature till she had got off the head and the skin. Then she rolled it up, and, after tucking in it the copper and silver leaves and the golden apple, she stowed it away in the mountain cleft.

When all this was done, she went over to the pig-sty, weeping all the way as if her heart would break. There she put on the wooden skirt and went up to the palace. Going into the kitchen,

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she said she was Kari Wooden-skirt and wanted work.

"Yes," said the cook, "you may stay and wash dishes, for the one whose work it was has just gone off. You'll leave us in the lurch, too, I suppose, as soon as you get tired of the work."

No, indeed, she was not going to do that.

She was quick and neat at her work. When Sunday came, and visitors were expected at the palace, Kari begged to be allowed to take up washing water to the prince, but the other maids laughed at her and said:

"What do you expect to do? Do you think the prince will take any notice of such a looking thing as you are?"

But Kari did not give up, and at last they let her go.

As she sped up the stairs, the wooden skirt made such a clatter that the prince came out and asked: "Who are you?"

"I was just bringing up the water for you to wash," said Kari.

"Do you think I want water that you have carried?" said the prince, throwing the water over her, and with that she had to go.

Now she begged them to let her go to church, and, as that was so near, they gave her leave. Before starting she went to the mountain wall

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and tapped with the stick she found there, just as the bull had bidden her.

Instantly a man appeared, who asked her what she desired. The princess answered that she had permission to go to church and hear the sermon, but she had no clothes to wear. Thereupon the man brought her a dress that shone like the copper trees, and after that he came with a horse all saddled. When she arrived at church, all wondered who she could be, and they scarcely heard what the parson said for looking at her. The prince thought her so charming that he hardly took his eyes off her a minute.

As she was leaving the church, the prince sprang forward to close the doors after her, and managed to keep one of her gloves, and, when she was mounting her horse, he came up close to her and asked where she came from.

"I am from Washing-land," said Kari, and, as the prince was handing back her glove, she said:

*"Light before and dark behind on my way,
So the prince can't see where I'm riding to-day."*

Nor did he see what became of her.

Never had the prince seen a glove like the one left in his hand, and now he went about everywhere trying to find some one who could tell him where

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the land lay which the proud lady came from, as she said, but no one knew where it was.

When Sunday came, some one was to take a towel up to the prince.

"Oh! let me go with it," said Kari.

"What good will that do you?" said the others.

"You saw what happened before."

Kari would not give up, but teased until she got leave. Then she ran up the stairs, her wooden skirt clattering at every step. The prince rushed out, and, when he saw it was Kari, he grabbed the towel and threw it in her face, saying:

"Clear out of here, you ugly troll! Do you think I will have a towel that has been in your dirty fingers?"

Later the prince went to church, and Kari begged to go, too. They asked her how she could think of going when she looked so disgusting and had nothing to wear but that wooden skirt.

But Kari said she thought the parson preached so well that it did her good to hear him, so at last they let her go. She went to the mountain and knocked, and this time the man brought her a gown even finer than the one she had before, for it was embroidered all over with silver thread which glittered like the silver forest, and a fine horse was led out with trappings and reins embroidered with silver.

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When the king's daughter arrived at church, the people were still standing about outside; they all wondered who she could be, and the prince rushed forward and wanted to hold her horse while she alighted. But she leaped off, saying no one need hold him, for he was so well trained that he stood still at her command and came when she called him. Then all went into church, but there were not many who heard what the parson said, they were all so busy looking at her, and the prince was even more in love with her than before. When the service was over, and she came out of church, he was at her side again to ask where she came from.

"I am from Towel-land," said the princess, dropping her riding-whip.

As the prince stooped to pick it up, she said:

*"Light before and dark behind,
My way the prince will never find."*

Again she had disappeared, and the prince could not imagine what had become of her. So he went up and down the country asking for the land she said she had come from, but no one could tell him where it lay, and again he had to wait in patience.

The next Sunday, when some one had to take a comb up to the prince, Kari begged that she might

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go with it, but the others reminded her of what had happened last time. They scolded her, too, for being willing to show herself to the prince, black and dirty as she was, in her wooden skirt, but she kept on teasing until they let her go with the comb. When the prince heard her clattering up the staircase, he darted out, seized the comb, and threw it after her, telling her to begone. Later the prince drove to church, and Kari again asked leave to go; again they asked her why she wanted to go when she was so grimy and had no decent clothes to appear in before people. The prince might see her, they said, and other fine people, and they would be as unhappy as she herself. To that Kari replied they had other things to look at, and she kept on teasing until she was allowed to go.

Now everything happened just as before. She went to the mountain and knocked with the stick, and the man came out, bringing her a dress much grander than the others; it was almost entirely of gold and precious stones, and there was a splendid horse with trappings and bit embroidered with gold.

When the princess reached the church, she found the parson and the people on the hill outside, all waiting for her. The prince came running to hold her horse, but she leaped down, saying:

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"No, thank you, my horse doesn't need to be held; he is so well trained that he stands when I tell him to."

Then all hurried into the church, and the parson into the pulpit, but no one listened much to what he said; they were all too busy looking at her and wondering where she came from. As for the prince, he was nearly out of his senses, he was so in love, and he just sat staring at her.

When the service was over, and the princess was leaving the church, there was a pool of soft tar outside the door which the prince had had thrown there that he might offer to lift her over. Kari did not mind the tar at all, but, setting one foot in it, leaped across. So one gold slipper was left sticking in the tar. She had just mounted her horse, when the prince came rushing out of church, and asked where she came from.

"From Comb-land," said Kari, but as the prince was handing her the slipper, she said:

*"Light before and dark behind on my way,
So the prince can't see whither I ride to-day."*

Nor could the prince imagine what had become of her, and he traveled about an everlasting long time, inquiring for Comb-land, but when he could find no one who could tell him its whereabouts, he gave out a proclamation that he would marry

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whoever could wear the golden slipper. Many girls came from far and near, both handsome and homely, but not one of them had a foot small enough to put on the golden slipper. Finally, who should come but Kari Wooden-skirt's bad step-mother with her daughter—and the slipper *fitted her*—but she was as ugly as ever, and looked so disagreeable that the prince found it very hard to keep his promise. However, they began to get ready for the wedding, and she was dressed as a bride, but, as they were riding to church, a little bird in a tree sang:

*"A bit off the heel,
'And a bit off the toe,
Kari Wooden-skirt's slipper
Is full of blood."*

So they looked to see if the bird had told the truth, and the blood was really running out of the slipper. Then all the maids and all the young women in the palace had to come forward and try on the slipper, but not one of them could get her foot in.

"Well, where is Kari Wooden-skirt?" asked the prince, for he understood birds' songs better than any of the others, and was thinking very hard what this one could mean.

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"Oh, *that* girl!" said the others—"there's no use in her trying—she has feet like a horse."

"Very likely," said the prince, "but when all the others have tried, Kari Wooden-skirt ought to have a chance, too."

"Kari," he called, opening the door, and up the stairs came Kari with her wooden skirt clattering as if a whole regiment of dragoons were marching double-quick.

"Now you are to try on the golden slipper and be made a princess," the other girls said, laughing and making fun of her.

Kari took up the slipper and let her foot glide into it; then she threw off the wooden skirt, and there she stood in her shining gold dress, and she had the mate to the slipper on her other foot. The prince knew her at once and was so delighted that he ran up, threw his arms round her, and kissed her. When he heard that she was a king's daughter, he was still happier, and then came the wedding.

Fin, fan, fun, my tale is done.

The Parson and the Sexton

ONCE upon a time there was a parson who was such a bully that he started bawling a long way off whenever he saw any one driving towards him on the highroad: "Get out of the way, get out of the way!—Here comes the parson." One day when he was going on in this way, he met the king himself.

"Out of the way, out of the way!" he bellowed from afar. But the king drove on just as he pleased, and this time it was the parson who had to turn out. When the king came up with him, he said: "To-morrow you will meet me at the palace, and if you can't answer three questions which I shall ask you, I'll unfrock you for your pride."

This was not exactly the kind of talk the parson was used to. He could bully and bawl and behave abominably, but he was not much of a hand at questions and answers. So he went to see the sexton, who was said to be better in a surplice than the parson himself. He told the sexton that he did not care much about going to the palace, for a fool could ask more questions than three wise men could answer, and he begged the sexton to go in his stead.

Yes, indeed, the sexton set off for the palace,

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dressed in the parson's ruff and cassock. The king was out on the porch to meet him, with crown and sceptre, and altogether he was so splendid that he shone and glittered a long way off.

"Hullo, are you there?" said the king.

"Sure enough," said the sexton.

"Well, tell me first," said the king, "how far is it from the east to the west?"

"That is a day's journey," said the sexton.

"How do you make that out?" asked the king.

"Why the sun rises in the east and goes down in the west," said the sexton, "and does it easily in a day."

"Very well," said the king; "but now, tell me how much do you think I am worth, just as I stand?"

"Well, Christ was valued at thirty pieces of silver, so I suppose I scarcely dare set you higher than twenty-nine," said the sexton.

"Not so bad," said the king. "Since you are so ready at everything, perhaps you can tell me what I am thinking now."

"Oh," said the sexton, "you are thinking it is the parson who stands before you, but so help me if you aren't wrong, for I am the sexton."

"Be off home with you, and you shall be parson, and he shall be sexton," said the king, and so it was.

The Rich Farmer's Wife

THERE was once a rich farmer who owned big property; silver was stowed away in his chest, and he had money in the bank besides; but he felt something was wanting, for he was a widower. One day his neighbor's daughter was working for him, and he took a great fancy to her. As her parents were poor, he thought he had only to hint at marriage, and she would jump at the chance. So he told her he had really been thinking of getting married again.

"Oh, yes, one can think all kinds of things," said the girl, chuckling to herself.

She thought the ugly old fellow might have thought of something that suited him better than getting married.

"Well, you see, I thought you might be my wife," said the farmer.

"No, thank you," said the girl, "I can't see much in that."

The farmer was not used to hearing "No," and the less she wanted him, the crazier he was to have her.

As he did not get anywhere with the girl, he sent for her father and told him, if he could manage to make her consent, he need not pay back the money he had borrowed of the farmer and he

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might have the field that lay next to his meadow into the bargain.

Well, the father thought he would soon bring his daughter to her senses. "She is only a child," he said, "and doesn't know what is best for her."

But all his talking and coaxing did no good. She would not have the farmer, not even if he was plastered all over with gold right up to his ears.

The farmer waited day after day. Finally he grew so angry and impatient that he said to the girl's father, if he were going to keep his promise, matters would have to be fixed at once, for he would not wait any longer.

The father saw no way out of it except for the rich farmer to get everything ready for the wedding, and, when the parson and the wedding guests were there, to send for the girl just as if she were wanted for some work on the farm. When she came, he would have to marry her in a hurry, so she would have no chance to change her mind.

The rich farmer thought this was all right, so he set to brewing and baking and getting ready for the wedding in grand style. When the guests had come, the rich farmer called one of his boys and told him to run down to the neighbor's and ask him to send what he had promised.

"But if you're not back right away," he said, shaking his fist at the boy, "I'll . . ." he didn't

The Rich Farmer's Wife

have a chance to say more, for the boy was off like a flash.

"My boss wants you to send what you've promised him," said the boy when he got to the neighbor's, "but you've got to hustle, for he's in an awful hurry to-day."

"All right, run down to the meadow and take her along, for there you'll find her," said the neighbor.

The boy hurried off, and when he got to the meadow, he found the daughter raking.

"I came to fetch what your father has promised my boss," he said.

"Ah, ha, is that the way you're going to fool me?" thought the girl.

"Is that what you're after?" she said. "I suppose it is that little bay mare of ours. You must go over and get her; she's tethered on the other side of the peas."

The boy jumped on the back of the little bay mare and rode her home at full gallop.

"Have you got her with you?" said the rich farmer.

"She's down at the door," said the boy.

"Take her up to my mother's room," said the farmer.

"Goodness gracious, how are you going to manage that?" said the boy.

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"You just do as I tell you," said the farmer. "If you can't manage it alone, get the others to help you." He thought the girl might make trouble.

When the boy saw his master's face, he knew there was no use arguing. So he got all the help and hurried down. Some tugged at the head, and some pushed behind, and at last they got the mare upstairs and into the bedroom. There lay the wedding finery all ready.

"Well, I've finished the job, boss," said the boy, "but it was no easy matter, the very worst I've ever had to do on this farm."

"All right, you shan't have done it for nothing," said the farmer. "Now send the women folk up to dress her."

"But, my goodness gracious!" said the boy.

"No nonsense," said the farmer; "tell them to dress her and to forget neither wreath nor crown."

The boy hurried down into the kitchen.

"Now, listen, girls," he said, "hurry upstairs and dress the little bay mare as a bride. I guess the boss wants to make the wedding guests snicker."

Well, the girls dressed the little bay mare in everything that was there. Then the boy went down and said she was ready, with wreath and crown and all.

The Rich Farmer's Wife

"All right, bring her down," said the rich farmer. "I'll receive her myself at the door."

There was a terrible clatter on the stairs, for this bride did not come down in satin slippers. But when the door was opened, and the rich farmer's bride came into the parlor, there was plenty of giggling and snickering.

And as for the rich farmer, he was so pleased with his bride that he did not go courting again.

IV

The Smith Who Could Not Get into Hell

IN THE days when our Lord and St. Peter walked on earth, they came, once upon a time, to a smith who had made a bargain with the devil to belong to him after seven years if during that time he could be the master of all other smiths; and both the smith and the devil had signed their names to this contract. That was why the smith had set up over his smithy door a big sign which read: "Here lives the master of all masters!"

When Our Lord came along and saw this, He went in.

"Who are you?" he said to the smith.

"Read what's over the door," said the smith, "and if you can't read, you'll have to wait till some one comes along to help you."

Before Our Lord could answer, a man came along leading a horse which he wanted the smith to shoe.

"Won't you let me shoe him?" said Our Lord.

"You can try," said the smith; "you can't do it so badly but that I can fix it again."

So Our Lord went out and cut off one of the horse's forelegs, put it in the forge, made the shoe glowing hot, sharpened the calks and nails and drove them home and then put the leg, whole and

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perfect, back on the horse. When that was done, he took the other front leg and did the same, and after putting that leg back, took the two hind legs, first the right and then the left, put them in the forge till the shoes were white with heat, sharpened calks and nails and drove them in and finally put these legs, too, back on the horse.

The smith stood by all the time watching Him.

"You're not such a bad smith, after all," he said.

"Do you think so?" said Our Lord.

Soon after the smith's mother came to tell him dinner was ready. She was old and wrinkled, bent double, and barely able to walk.

"Now you mark carefully what you see," said Our Lord, and He took the old woman, put her into the forge, and changed her into a beautiful young girl.

"I repeat what I've said," said the smith, "you're quite a smith. Over my door stands : 'Here lives the master of all masters,' but even if I have to say it myself, 'We live and learn,' " and, so saying, he went home to eat his dinner.

When he came back to the smithy, a man rode up who wanted his horse shod. Our Lord and St. Peter were still there.

"I'll do it in a jiffy," said the smith; "I've just learned a new way of shoeing which isn't so bad

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when the days are short." So he began to cut and break till he had taken off the horse's four legs, "For," said he, "I don't see why one should bother to take them one by one."

He put the legs into the forge just as he had seen Our Lord do, heaped on a lot of coal, and told the apprentices to work the bellows hard. But it turned out just as one might have expected; the legs burned up, and the smith had to pay for the horse. That did not please him at all.

Just then a poor old hag came hobbling along, and the smith thought that, though he had not succeeded in one thing, he was sure to with the other, so he grabbed the old woman and put her into the forge, paying no attention to her cries and prayers.

"Old as you are, you don't know what's good for you," said the smith; "you'll be a young girl again in a minute, and I won't charge you a cent for the forging." But it went no better with the old woman than with the horse's legs.

"That was a shame," said Our Lord.

"Oh, she won't be missed," answered the smith; "but the devil ought to be ashamed: he is hardly keeping to what stands over my door."

"Suppose I were to give you three wishes, what would they be?" said Our Lord.

"Just try," said the smith, "and you'll find out."

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So Our Lord asked him what they were.

"Well, then, I wish, first, that whenever I tell some one to climb up into the pear tree outside the smithy wall, he will have to stay there till I tell him he may come down again," said the smith. "Next, I wish that when I beg any one to sit down in the arm-chair in the workroom, he will have to stay there till I myself beg him to get up again, and, lastly, whenever I ask some one to creep into the steel mesh purse I have in my pocket, he will have to stay there till I give him leave to creep out again."

"You've wished very foolishly," said St. Peter; "first of all, you should have asked for God's grace and friendship."

"I didn't dare ask for anything so great," said the smith, whereupon Our Lord and St. Peter bade him goodbye and left.

Well, time wore on, and when the seven years were up, the devil came, according to the terms of the contract, to fetch the smith.

"Are you ready?" he asked, poking his nose in at the smithy door.

"Well, first I should really like to make a head to this nail," answered the smith. "Meanwhile you just climb up into the pear tree and pick a pear to munch on. You must be both hungry and thirsty after your trip."

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The devil thanked him for the kind offer, and climbed up into the pear tree.

"Well, now, as I consider this job," said the smith, "I'm afraid it will take me at least four years to make a head to this nail, for the iron is as hard as the deuce; all that time you can't come down, but you'll get a good rest sitting up there."

The devil begged and implored for all he was worth to be allowed to come down, but it did no good. At last he had to promise to do as the smith said and not to come back for four years.

"Now you may come down again," said the smith.

When the time was up, there was the devil again to fetch the smith.

"Now you must be ready," said the devil. "You must have made a head on that nail by this time."

"Yes, I've got the head on," said the smith, "but you've come a little too soon all the same, for I haven't sharpened the point yet. While I'm sharpening the nail, you may sit down in my arm-chair and rest, for I am sure you must be tired."

"Thanks," said the devil, sitting down in the arm-chair. But no sooner was he seated than the smith told him that, as he looked his work over, he was afraid it would take him at least four years to sharpen the nail and that the devil would have to sit there while he worked. At first the devil begged

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him politely to let him out of the chair, but then he got angry and began to threaten him. The smith kept making all kinds of excuses, saying it was the fault of the iron, which was hard as the deuce, and he tried to console the devil by telling him how comfortable he was in the arm-chair and that he would certainly let him out in four years on the stroke of the clock.

At last the devil saw there was nothing for it but to promise that he would not come for the smith till the four years were over.

"Well, then, you can get up," said the smith, and the devil hustled off as fast as ever he could.

In four years he came back to fetch the smith.

"Well, now, you *must* be ready," said the devil, poking his nose in at the smithy door.

"Yes, I'm Johnny-on-the-spot," said the smith, "ready to go whenever you say so. But just listen, there's one thing I've thought over and wanted to ask you about for ever so long. Is it true, as they say, that the devil can make himself as small as he wants to?"

"Of course it's true," answered the devil.

"Then I really think you might do me the favor of creeping into my steel-mesh purse to see if there are any holes in it," said the smith. "I'm so afraid I might lose my traveling money."

"Why, certainly," said the devil, making himself

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so tiny he could crawl into the purse, and in a trice the smith snapped it shut.

"Yes, it is whole and perfect everywhere," said the devil, inside the purse.

"You are probably right," said the smith, "but a stitch in time saves nine, so I think I'll solder the joints a little, just to make sure." Whereupon, he put the purse into the forge and made it glowing hot.

"Oh, me!—are you mad?" shrieked the devil. "Don't you know I'm inside the purse?"

"I'm sorry I can't help you," said the smith; "there's an old saying that you must strike while the iron is hot." At this, he took his great sledgehammer, laid the purse on the anvil, and basted it for all he was worth.

"Oh, ouch, oh!" shrieked the devil. "Oh, please let me out, and I'll promise faithfully never to come back again."

"Well, now, I guess the joints are pretty well soldered," said the smith, "so I'll let you out."

So the smith opened the purse, and the devil jumped out and rushed off in such a hurry, he did not even dare to look back.

As the smith thought over the whole matter, he thought he had made a mistake in falling out with the devil, "For if I don't get into heaven," he said to himself, "I might be without lodgings, since

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I'm on bad terms with the fellow who rules in hell." He decided he might as well try now as later to see whether he could get into either heaven or hell; then he would know what was in store for him. So he shouldered his hammer and started off.

When he had gone quite a bit, he came to the crossroads where they branched off to heaven and hell, and there he met a tailor's apprentice, shuffling along with his pressing iron in his hand.

"How do you do?" said the smith. "Where are you going?"

"To heaven, if I can only get in," answered the tailor.

"Well, I'm afraid we can't keep company very long," answered the smith. "I thought I'd first try hell, for I know the devil slightly from old days."

So they said goodbye, and each went his way. The smith, who was a big, husky fellow, walked more quickly than the tailor, and it took him only a short time to reach the gates of hell. He told the watchman to say there was some one waiting outside who wanted to speak to the devil.

"Go out and ask who it is," said the devil to the watchman, who hurried off to do his bidding.

"Tell him it's the smith who owned the purse," said the smith. "He'll know, and beg him kindly to let me in at once, for I'm pretty tired,

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having worked till noon, and been walking ever since."

When the devil heard who it was, he ordered the watchman to lock all the nine locks of hell. "And put an extra bolt on, too," he said, "for if that fellow gets in, he'll raise an awful row in hell."

"There's no use hanging around here," said the smith to himself, when he heard how fast everything was being locked. "I'll have to try heaven." So he turned around and went back till he reached the crossroads, where he took the road the tailor had taken.

As he was angry at having gone so far in vain, he hurried along, and reached the gates of heaven just as St. Peter opened them wide enough to let the thin tailor squeeze through. The smith was some six or seven feet off. "There's no time to lose," he thought, and he hurled his hammer at the crack in the gate, just as the tailor was slipping through.

If the smith did not get through the crack, then I don't know what has become of him.

The Virgin Mary as Godmother

DEEP, deep within a great forest there once lived a poor couple. They were indeed so very poor that when the woman gave birth to a lovely little girl they did not know how they should ever get her christened.

So one day the man went out to seek for some one who would act as godfather or godmother and pay the expenses, but, though he wandered about all day long asking first one and then another and found all willing enough to be godfather, no one thought he could afford to pay the parson. On his way home in the evening he met a beautiful lady. She was magnificently dressed, and, what was more, she looked kind and good. She offered to have the child christened on condition that she might keep it herself. The man replied that he would first have to consult his wife, but when he got home and told her of the offer, she refused point blank.

So the next day the man set out again, but he still found no one who would stand godparent if the parson had to be paid, and all his entreaties were of no avail. On his way home in the evening he met again the beautiful lady who looked so kind, and again she offered her services.

When he told his wife of the second meeting,

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she said that if on the next day he met with no better success, she supposed she would have to give her child to the lady who looked so kind and good.

The man was no more fortunate on the third day, so when he met the lady again in the evening, he promised she should have the child if only she would have it baptized and brought up a Christian. The next morning the lady came with two men to the hut where the couple lived, and she carried the child away to church, where it was christened. Then she took the little girl home, and for several years she lived with her foster-mother, who was always kind and good to her.

When the little girl was old enough to take care of herself, the foster-mother prepared to start on a journey.

"You may go wherever you like," she said to the girl, "only not into any of the rooms which I shall now point out to you." Then the lady went away.

But the girl could not resist taking a little peep through one of the doors, and pst!—out flew a star.

When the foster-mother came home, she was very angry and threatened to turn the girl out, but she cried and begged so hard that at last she was allowed to stay.

Not long after, the foster-mother prepared to

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go away again, and forbade the girl to enter either of the two rooms she had not been in. She promised to obey, but when she had been wandering about a while alone, thinking and wondering what could be in the other two rooms, she could not help just turning the handle of one of the doors to have a little peep, and pst!—out flew the moon.

When the foster-mother returned and found the moon had escaped, she was very unhappy and said that it was now impossible for her to keep the girl any longer; she would have to go. But she cried so hard and begged so earnestly that once more the lady yielded and let her stay.

After a while the foster-mother had to go away on another journey. The girl was now nearly grown-up, and she was warned most seriously that she must on no account enter, or even look into, the third room.

When the foster-mother had been gone a long time, and the girl had wandered about feeling very lonely and not knowing what to do with herself, she thought:

“What fun it would be to peep into that third room.”

At first she was resolved that, for the sake of her foster-mother, she would not do it, but when she passed the door again later on, she could not contain herself any longer, and felt she simply

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had to look into the room, so she took one little peep, and pst!—out flew the sun.

When the foster-mother came back and saw that the sun was gone, she was very angry indeed, and said that this time it was impossible for the girl to stay with her another day. Though she cried and begged even harder than before, it was of no use.

“No, now I must punish you,” said the foster-mother. “You can choose whether you would rather be the most beautiful of all women but forever dumb, or the ugliest and able to speak. But go you must!”

“Well, I would rather be beautiful,” said the girl. She had her wish, but from that moment she was dumb.

After she had left the foster-mother, she wandered through a great forest; here she walked on and on, but could never get out of it. As evening drew on, she climbed up into a high tree which grew right over a well, and there she fell asleep.

Quite near there stood a castle, and early in the morning a maid came out to fetch some water from the well for the princess's tea. Seeing a lovely face reflected in the water, the maid took it for her own; so she threw down the bucket, ran home, and said with a toss of her head:

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"If I'm as pretty as all that, I'm far too good to carry water."

So another was sent for the water, but the same thing happened to her. She, too, came back, saying that she was far too good and too pretty to fetch water for the princess.

Finally the prince went himself, for he wanted to find out what it was all about. When he reached the pond, he also saw the reflection and, looking up quickly, beheld the beautiful girl sitting in the tree. He coaxed her down and took her home and wanted to make her his queen, she was so lovely.

But his mother, who was still alive, was against it.

"Why, she can't speak," said the old queen. "She's probably a witch."

The prince, however, did not give up until he had married her.

After they had been married a while, and she was going to have a baby, the prince surrounded her with a strong guard. Just before the baby was born, every one fell into a deep sleep. Then the foster-mother came, cut the baby's finger, smeared the princess's mouth with the blood.

"Now you'll be as unhappy as I was when you let the star out!" she said. Whereupon she disappeared with the child.

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When the guards awoke, they thought the princess had eaten her own child, and the old queen wanted her burnt. The prince was so fond of her, however, that he begged till he had saved her, though it was no easy matter.

The next time the young princess was going to have a baby, they placed a guard around her twice as strong as before, but exactly the same thing happened, and this time the foster-mother said:

"You'll be just as sorry as I was when you let out the moon!"

The princess begged and wept—for she could speak when the foster-mother was there—but it did no good. The old queen wanted her burnt this time without mercy, but once more the prince succeeded in begging her off.

When the princess was about to have her third baby, they trebled the guards. But everything happened just as before. The foster-mother came while the guards were asleep, took the child, cut its little finger and smeared the blood on the princess' mouth, saying:

"Now you will be just as unhappy as I was when the sun was let out!"

This time it was impossible for the prince to save her, for every one said she must be burned.

Just as they were leading her to the funeral pyre, the foster-mother appeared with all three

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children, leading two by the hand and with the third on her arm.

She went up to the young princess and said:

“Here are your children. Now you may have them back. I am the Virgin Mary, and I was just as unhappy as you have been, when you let out the sun and the moon and the star. You have been punished for what you did, and from henceforth you will be able to speak.”

You can all imagine—though it is not easy to describe—how overjoyed the prince and princess were. They were happy ever afterwards, and the old queen also loved the young princess from that day on.

The Lad with the Beer Keg

ONCE upon a time there was a lad who had been long in the service of a man up in the North.

This man was a master at brewing beer. It was so marvelously good that nothing like it could be found anywhere else.

When the lad was about to leave, and the man was to pay him the wages he had earned, he wanted nothing but a keg of the Christmas beer. Yes, that he got, and off he went with it and carried it both long and far. But the longer he carried the beer keg, the heavier it grew, so that he began looking around to see if no one were in sight with whom he could drink, and so draw off some of the beer and lighten the keg.

After a long while, he met an old man with a long beard.

"How do you do?" said the man.

"How do you do?" said the lad.

"Where are you going?" said the man.

"I'm looking for some one to drink with me, so as to lighten my keg," said the lad.

"Can't you drink with me just as well as with any one else?" asked the man; "I have traveled so far and wide that I am both tired and thirsty."

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"Yes, that I can," said the lad; "but where do you come from, and what kind of a man are you?" he asked.

"I am Our Lord, and I come from heaven," said the man.

"I won't drink with you," said the lad, "for you make such a big difference between people here in the world, and divide so unfairly that some become very rich and some very poor. No! I won't drink with you," said he, and he trudged off again with his keg.

When he had gone a bit farther, the keg again became so heavy that he felt he had not the strength to carry it any longer, unless some one came with whom he could drink, so that there would be less beer in the keg. Well, just then he met an ugly, raw-boned man who came rushing along.

"How do you do?" said the man.

"How do you do?" said the lad.

"Where are you going?" asked the man.

"Oh, I'm looking for some one to drink with me, so I could draw some beer and lighten my keg," said the boy.

"Can't you just as well drink with me as with any one else?" asked the man; "I've journeyed far and wide, and a sip of beer would do an old body good," he said.

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"Yes, that I can," said the lad. "But who are you, and where do you come from?" he asked.

"I? I'm well known; I'm the devil, and I come from hell," said the man.

"No," said the lad; "you only torture and plague people, and wherever any misfortune comes they always say it's your fault. I won't drink with you," said the lad.

So once more he wandered on and on and farther and farther with his beer keg, till it seemed to him he could not possibly carry it any farther.

He began once more looking around to see if some one were not coming with whom he could drink so as to lighten his keg. Yes, after a while another man came along, and he was so dry and raw-boned that it seemed a miracle that he hung together.

"How do you do?" said the man.

"How do you do?" said the lad.

"Where are you going?" asked the man.

"I was looking to see if I could find any one to drink with me so as to lighten my keg a little," said the lad.

"Can't you drink with me just as well as with any one?" asked the man.

"Yes, that I can," said the lad; "but what kind of a fellow are you?" he asked.

"They call me Death," said the man.

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"You I'll drink with," said the lad, and he sat down his keg and began tapping the beer into a bowl. "You're a fine man, for you treat all alike, both rich and poor." So he drank with him, and Death thought the drink delicious.

The lad encouraged him to keep on, and they took turns drinking, so the beer lessened, and the keg grew lighter.

At last Death said: "I have never known a drink that tasted better, nor one which did me so much good as the beer you have poured for me. I have felt as if I were new-born inside, and I don't know what I can do for you in return."

But after reflecting for a while, he said that the keg should never become empty, no matter how much they drank of it, and the beer in it should become a healing draught so that the lad would be able to cure the sick better than any doctor. And then he said that when the lad entered a sick-room, he would always be there and appear to him, and he would give him for a sure sign that when Death sat at the foot of the bed, he would be able to heal the sufferer with a draught from the keg, but if he sat at the head of the bed, no advice nor remedy could save him from Death.

The lad soon became so well known that he was sent for from both far and wide, and he restored to health numberless patients for whom

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there had been no hope. When he entered a sick-room and saw where Death sat, he foretold either life or death, and he always prophesied aright. He became both a rich and a mighty man, and at last they sent for him for a princess in a far-away country. She was so dangerously ill that no doctor thought he could help her any more, so they promised the lad all he could wish or ask for if he only saved her life. When he entered the princess' room, there sat Death at the head of the bed, but he was nodding and dozing, and while he sat thus the princess felt better.

"It's a case of life or death," said the doctor, "and if I judge rightly, there's small chance of saving her."

But they told him he *must* save her, even if it cost the whole kingdom. He looked at Death, and, when he dozed off again, the lad motioned to the servants to turn the bed around quickly so that Death would be sitting by her feet. Just as this was done, he gave the princess the healing draught, and she was saved.

"Now you have cheated me," said Death, "and now we're quits."

"I had to do that if I were to win the kingdom," said the lad.

"That won't help you much," said Death. "Your time is up, for now you belong to me."

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"Well, if that is so, so be it," said the lad; "but I suppose you'll let me say the Lord's Prayer first."

Yes, that he might, but the lad took good care not to repeat "Our Father." He repeated everything else, but the Lord's Prayer never passed his lips, and at last he believed he had cheated Death in earnest. But when it seemed to Death this had lasted too long, he hung up over the lad's head a big slate on which was written Our Father. When the lad awoke, he began reading it, and he did not think what he was doing until he came to "Amen," and then it was too late.

*The Gertrude Bird**

IN THE good old days when Our Lord and St. Peter were walking about here on earth, they chanced one day upon a woman who was busy baking. Her name was Gertrude, and she wore a red cap.

As they had walked a long distance and were hungry, Our Lord asked the woman politely to let him taste one of her cakes. Yes, he might have one, but it was a small bit of dough she rolled out, and yet it grew so big that it filled the whole pan. Well, she could not give him that cake, it was much too big. So she took even a tinier piece of dough, but when she had baked it in the pan, that cake was also too large to give them. The third time she took even less dough—just the teeniest-weeniest, but again the cake grew far too large.

“Well, I’m afraid I have nothing to give you,” said Gertrude. “You’ll have to leave without so much as a taste, for all the cakes get too big.”

Then Our Lord grew angry and said:

“Since you are unwilling to give me anything at all, you shall be punished by turning into a bird which will have to find its dry food in the bark of trees, and only when it rains shall you have anything to drink.”

*Norwegian name for the Red-headed Woodpecker.

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The words were scarcely out of His mouth before she was turned into the Gertrude bird and flew away from before the rolling-board and up the chimney.

To this very day you can see her flying about with her red cap and her feathers all black from the soot of the chimney. She is always hacking and pecking for food in the trees and whistling when it is going to rain, for then she can get water to quench her thirst.

The Skipper and Old Nick

ONCE upon a time there was a skipper who was incredibly lucky in all he undertook. No one got such freights, and no one made so much money. It just seemed to pour in on him, and there was no one at all who could make the trips he did, for wherever he sailed, the wind was with him. Yes, they even said he had only to turn his hat around, and the wind shifted the way he wished it to blow.

In this way he sailed for many years with cargoes of lumber and also to China, and he made money like sand. But once when he was hurrying home across the North Sea with all sails set, just as if he had stolen both vessel and cargo, the one who wanted to get hold of him hurried even faster. And that one was old Nick. For, as you may guess, he had made a bargain with him, and that very day the time was up, and he might expect old Nick any minute to come and fetch him.

Well, the skipper came up on deck and looked at the weather. Then he hailed the carpenter and a couple more of the crew and told them to go down in the hold and chop two holes in the hull of the boat, and when that was done they should fetch the pumps and ram them tightly into the holes so that the sea would rush high up.

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The crew wondered at all this and thought it was a queer business, but they did as the skipper had told them. They chopped two holes in the hull and rammed the pumps in so tightly that not a drop of water could reach the cargo. But the North Sea stood seven feet high in the pumps.

They had scarcely thrown the chips overboard after their work, when old Nick arrived in a gust of wind and grabbed the skipper by the neck. "Stop, old chap, there's no such devil of a hurry," said the skipper, and at the same time he began to defend himself and pry out old Nick's claws with a marline-spike. "Didn't you bargain always to keep the boat tight and dry?" said the skipper. "Well, you are a fine fellow! Measure the pumps! The water stands seven feet in their pipes. Pump, you devil, and pump the boat dry, then you can take me and shake me as much as you like!" he said.

Old Nick was no wiser than to let himself be fooled. He toiled and sweated till the sweat poured down his back like a river, and a mill wheel might easily have turned on his spine. But he just pumped the North Sea in and out. At last he was sick of the work and could not do a thing more, so he hurried home to his great-grandmother, cursing mad, to take a rest. As for the skipper, if he isn't dead, he is still sailing the sea and shifting the wind as he turns his hat.

v

Such Is the World's Reward

ONCE upon a time there was a man who was on his way to a forest to cut fence poles. But he did not find trees tall and straight and big enough for his purpose until he came high up under the rocks.

There he heard some one wailing and screaming for dear life, so he went on to see what was the matter and if any one needed help. The man found the noise came from under a boulder, so heavy that it would take many men to budge it. So he went back to the forest, chopped down a tree, and made a lever with which he pried up the boulder.

Out from under it came a dragon, who said he was going to eat up the man.

"What!" said the man. "I've just saved your life, and now you're going to eat me up for my pains? That's mighty poor thanks."

"That may be," said the dragon, "but you can understand how hungry I am after lying here for a hundred years without tasting food. I need something to eat, and anyhow such is the world's reward."

The man made a good case for himself and begged hard for his life, and at last they agreed that the first who came along should be judge; if

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he approved, the man was to live, otherwise the dragon might eat him up.

The first they saw was an old dog who came trotting along the road down by the field. They talked to him and asked him to be judge.

"God knows I've served my master faithfully ever since I was a little puppy," said the dog. "I've watched many a night and many a time while he has been in a sweet sleep; I've saved the farm and everything there more than once from fire and thieves. But now that I can no longer see or hear, he wants to shoot me, so I'm running away and shall have to beg from place to place till I starve to death. No, such is the world's reward."

"Then I may eat you!" said the dragon, and was just going to swallow the man.

But the man argued so well and begged so hard for his life that at last they agreed the next one who came along was to decide, and if he agreed with the dragon and the dog, the dragon might eat him up and get a meal of human flesh, but if he did not, the man was to escape with his life.

Now an old nag came limping along the road down by the field. To him they called and begged him to judge between them. To this he agreed.

"I have now served my master just as long as I could drag and carry," said the horse. "I've slaved and toiled for him so that the sweat has

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poured off me until now at last I am stiff and stark, worn out by work and old age, and can no longer earn my keep, so he says I'm to be shot. No, such is the world's reward!"

"Yes, yes, I'm going to eat you," said the dragon, opening his mouth wide, just about to swallow the man.

Once more the man begged hard for his life, but the dragon said he wanted a mouthful of human flesh awfully and was so hungry he could not stand it any longer.

"Look, there comes some one who looks as if he were made to be a judge," said the man, as Michael, the fox, came sneaking along between the rocks. "All good things are three," he went on; "let me ask him, too, and if he decides as did the others, you may eat me on the spot."

"All right," said the dragon, who had also heard that all good things were three and thought that would settle it.

The man told the fox the same that he had told the others.

"Quite right," said the fox, but then he took the man aside.

"What wages will you give me if I save you from the dragon?" whispered the fox in the man's ear.

"I'll take you home with me and you may take

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care of all my hens and geese every Thursday night," said the man.

"Well, this is no easy matter, my dear dragon," said the fox. "I can't get it into my head that such a big, fine animal as you could find room under that boulder."

"I lay out here basking in the sun," said the dragon, "when the mountain-slide came and covered me with the boulder."

"That's quite possible," said Michael, "but I can't understand it, and I don't believe it, either, unless I see it."

So the man thought they would have to try it, and down into the hole again slipped the dragon. Instantly the man seized the lever and lifted the boulder so that it slammed down on the top of the dragon.

"Now lie there till doomsday," said the fox, "you who wanted to swallow the man when he'd saved your life."

The dragon shrieked and wailed and begged for mercy, but the two went on their way.

Next Thursday evening the fox planned to be master in the chicken-coop, and hid behind a pile of sticks which lay there. When the girl came to feed the chickens, Michael sneaked in behind her so softly that she neither saw nor heard him. No sooner had she left than the fox killed enough

Such Is the World's Reward

chickens to last him for a week and gorged till he could not move. When she came back next morning, the fox lay snoring in the sun with his legs stretched out, and he was stuffed as tight and round as a sausage.

The girl rushed up to fetch her mistress, who brought all the girls with sticks and poles. They beat Michael nearly to death. When they thought he was about to die, he found a hole in the floor, leapt through it and dragged himself limping into the woods.

"Oh, my; oh, my," said Michael, the fox; "it's very certain, such is the world's reward!"



Drawing by Erik Werenskiöld

A bear had made his winter lair inside the pile

Good Old Bruin

THERE was once a farmer who went up the mountainside in the winter to gather a load of leaves for his cattle. When he came to the place where the leaves had been stacked, he backed up his horse and began throwing down the leafy boughs upon the sleigh. Now, a bear had made his winter lair inside the pile, so when the man began rummaging and pulling at the boughs, the bear awoke with a start, jumped high up, and landed right on the sleigh. When the horse smelt the bear, he got so scared, he bolted downhill as though he had stolen both bear and sleigh, and if you could only have seen him, you would have known he was wasting no time on the road.

A bear is no coward, but this one was not pleased with the lift he got. He held on tight and stared around on all sides, thinking how he would manage in case he had to jump. He was not used to driving and did not care much for it, either.

When he had ridden a long way, he met a peddler. "Where in heaven's name is the sheriff bound to-day?" said he. "He must be short of time and have a long way to go, since he is driving so fast."

But the bear did not answer a word; he had plenty to do to hold on. After a while he met an

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old gypsy woman. She nodded and courtesied and begged humbly for a few pennies. The bear said nothing, but just held fast and rode on like chain lightning.

When he got still farther down the hillside he met Michael fox. "Hello, hello! Are you out riding?" shouted Michael. "Wait a minute, and let me hang on as post boy."

Old Bruin did not say a word, but held on tight and rode just as fast as the horse could gallop.

*"You'll give me no lift, you mean old thing,
What will happen to you, I'm going to sing,
To-day you ride like the finest lord,
To-morrow you'll hang with back bare as a board,"*

shrieked the fox after him.

The bear did not heard a word that Michael said, but rode as fast as ever.

When the horse reached the farm, he bolted into the stable at full gallop, coming out of the harness and sleigh at the door; the bear cracked his skull against the jamb, and rolled over, dead as a door nail.

While all this was going on, the farmer was up in the stack piling up the leafy sheaves. It was not before he thought he had a full load, and was about to bind it together, that he noticed both

Good Old Bruin

horse and sleigh were gone. Then he had to trudge after and try to find his horse again.

After a while he met the peddler. "Have you seen a horse and sleigh?" he asked the peddler. "No," said the peddler, "but I met the sheriff a bit farther down the road; he was hustling along as if he was going to skin some one alive."

Soon he met the old gypsy woman. "Have you seen a horse and sleigh?" he asked her.

"No," said the old gypsy woman, "but I met the parson a bit down the road. He must have been out making parish calls, for he went so fast, and he was just in a plain farmer's wagon.

A little later the farmer met the fox. "Have you seen a horse and sleigh?" asked the farmer.

"Yes," said Michael; "but good old Bruin was driving, and as if he had stolen both horse and sleigh."

"To the devil with him," said the farmer. "I suppose he'll drive my horse to death."

"We'll skin him and roast him on the spot," said Michael; "but if you get your horse back you might give me a lift over the hill, for I'm fond of riding and would like to see what it feels like to have some one else do the work."

"What will you pay for the ride?" asked the farmer.

"You can pick and choose as you like," said the

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fox; "anyhow you'll get just as much out of me as out of Bruin Good-fellow, for he always wants big pay when he's out for a ride and hanging on to the back of the horse."

"All right, I'll give you a lift over the hill," said the farmer, "if you'll meet me here to-morrow." He knew the fox was making fun of him and was up to some of his usual tricks.

Next day the farmer put a loaded gun on the sleigh, and when Michael came and thought he was going to get a free ride, he got both barrels instead. So the farmer skinned him and had both a bear skin and a fox skin.

The Tailor and the Witch

(From *Mill-Stones*)

“**I**N MY early home,” said the old man, “they used to tell of something which happened long ago. It was about a farmer who owned a mill which had burned down on two successive Whitsunday evenings. As Whitsunday in the third year drew near, a tailor was visiting the farmer in order to make him a new suit of Sunday clothes.

“I wonder what will happen to the mill this year?” said the tailor. “If you’ll give me the key, I’ll look after it.”

The farmer was delighted to hear this, so towards evening he gave the key to the tailor, who then went down to the mill, which had just been rebuilt and was still empty. The tailor sat down in the middle of the floor, and, taking out his chalk, marked a big circle around himself, and outside the edge of this he wrote the Lord’s Prayer. That done, he was not afraid of anything—not even should the devil himself come in.

In the middle of the night the door suddenly flew open, and black cats swarmed into the room. It did not take them long to put the porridge on and build such a fire under it that the kettle boiled and sputtered as if it were full of tar and pitch.

“Ha, ha!” thought the tailor, “so this is what

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goes on." Just at this moment one of the cats thrust her paw behind the kettle and tried to upset it.

"Pst! cat, you'll burn yourself!" cried the tailor.

"The tailor says, 'Pst! cat, you'll burn yourself!' " said the cat to all the others, so they all rushed from the fireplace and began jumping and dancing around the circle. Every once in a while the cat sneaked over to the fireplace and tried to tip over the kettle.

"Pst! cat, you'll burn yourself!" cried the tailor again and frightened the cat away from the fire.

"The tailor says, 'Pst! cat, you'll burn yourself!' " said the cat to the others, and then they all set to dancing and jumping again, but every once in a while the leader tried to sneak over and upset the kettle.

"Pst! cat, you'll burn yourself!" cried the tailor in such a loud voice that all the cats tumbled one over the other on the floor, and then they began to leap and dance as before.

Then they joined paws around the circle and began to whirl faster and faster and at last so fast that the tailor felt his head going round, too, and they glared at him with big, horrible eyes as if they were going to eat him alive.

Every once in a while the cat who had tried to upset the kettle thrust her paw inside the ring,

The Tailor and the Witch

just as if she were trying to get hold of the tailor. When he saw this, he opened his jack-knife and held it ready. Finally, the cat stuck her paw just inside the ring once too often. Quick as a flash, the tailor cut it off, and all the cats rushed out of the door, helter-skelter, as fast as they could, meowing and hissing.

The tailor then lay down inside the circle and slept soundly until the sun was high in the heavens.

When he came to the farmer's home, he and his wife were still abed, for it was Whitsunday morning and a holiday.

"Good morning," said the tailor, shaking hands with the man.

"Good morning," said the farmer, who, you may be sure, was both happy and surprised to see the tailor.

"Good morning, mother," said the tailor, holding out his hand to the farmer's wife.

"Good morning," said the old woman, but she was white as a sheet and looked queer and scared, as she hid her hand under the bed-clothes.

At last she held out her left hand, and then the tailor understood the whole affair. But I do not know what he said to the man, nor what happened to the woman.

The Enchanted Bride
(From *Christmas Stories*)

MANY years ago, there lived up in Haland an old, well-to-do couple. They had a son who was a dragoon, a tall, handsome fellow. They lived in a mountain farmhouse which was unlike many others in being pretty and well built, with windows and a chimney and a tight roof. There they spent the summers, and when they went home in the fall, the lumber-jacks and the hunters and all such folk as chanced then to be up on the mountain saw the fairies move into the farm with their live stock. A girl lived with them, so beautiful that no one had ever seen the like before.

The dragoon had often heard about her, so one autumn, when his parents had left, he put on his uniform and all his finery, saddled his horse, put his pistols into his holster, and rode up to the farm. When he reached the lawn, he saw such a fire inside the house that it shone through all the chinks in the walls. Then he knew that the fairies must be there. He tied his horse to a spruce tree, took out one of his pistols, and walked up to one of the windows to peep in. Inside he saw an old man and an old hag, all wrinkled and bent with age and so frightfully ugly, he felt he had never seen the like in all his life. But a girl was with

The Enchanted Bride

them, and she was so perfectly lovely that he felt he could not live without her. All three, including the girl, had cows' tails. He thought they must just have arrived, for everything was so tidy. The girl was washing the ugly old man, while the old woman was lighting the fire under the big kettle.

Suddenly the dragoon pushed the door open and fired his revolver right over the girl's head, so she fell in a heap on the floor. In a trice she was just as ugly as she had been beautiful a moment earlier, with a nose as long as his pistol holster.

"Now you can take her, for she's yours," said the old man. But the dragoon stood as if rooted to the spot and unable to move a foot forward or back.

The old man began washing the girl, till she looked a little better, and her nose shrank to half the size it had been. Her cow's tail was twisted into a knot, but even then it was no ornament.

"Now she's yours, my fine dragoon," said the ugly old father. "Lift her up in front of you on the saddle and ride home with her and marry her. You can fix a place for us in the little room in the barn, for we don't want to meet the wedding guests—but send us something to drink when the time comes."

The dragoon did not dare say No, but lifted the

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girl up on the saddle and went home to get ready for the wedding. Before they went to the church, the bride asked one of the bridesmaids to stand right behind her, so none of the guests would see her shed the cow's tail when the parson blessed her.

So they were married, and when they drank the bride's health, and the cup went round, the groom went out to the barn, to the room fixed up for the father- and mother-in-law. No one seemed to be there, and when he went out again after the wedding guests had left, he found the room filled with more gold and silver money than he had ever laid his eyes on.

Well, the young people lived happily for a long while. Whenever they had guests, they set out food and drink in the barn for the parents, and found in return so much money that, in the end, they did not know what to do with it all. But the girl was certainly ugly, and she did not get any prettier, so he got very tired of her, and once in a while, when he lost his temper, he beat her.

Once in the fall when he was going to town, and the ground was frozen hard, he thought he would first have his horse shod. So he went to the smithy, and, though he was a good smith, whatever he did, the shoe seemed always too big or too small, or for some reason or other, it did not fit. As he

The Enchanted Bride

had no other horse, both dinner and supper time came around without his getting any further.

"See if you can put *this* shoe on," called his wife, holding out one. "You aren't much of a husband, and you seem to be even a worse smith," she continued. "I think I'd better turn smith myself, for if the shoe is too large, it should be made smaller, and if it's too small, bigger."

So she went into the smithy, and the first thing she did was to bend the shoe into shape with her hands.

"You've got pretty strong fists," said the man, staring at her.

"Do you think so?" she said. "What do you think would have happened to me if you'd had as strong fists? But I'm too fond of you to use my strength upon you."

And from that day forth he became a model husband.

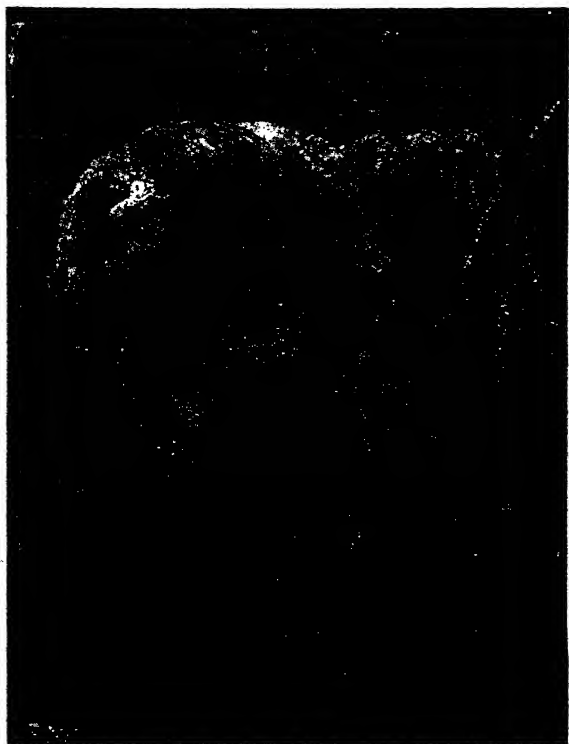
The Boys Who Met the Trolls in Hedal Woods

ONCE upon a time an old couple lived on a little farm in Vaage, far up in the Gudbrands valley. They had lots of children, and because they were very poor, two of the half-grown boys had to go begging around the countryside. These boys soon learned to know every road and path, even the foot-path to Hedal.

One day the boys decided to follow this path, and so off they started, taking a short-cut over the big swamps, and as they had heard that some falcon catchers had built a hut near Mala, they thought they would go in there on their way and see the birds and how they were caught.

It was already so late in the autumn that the dairy-maids had left the mountain pastures for home, and the boys could find neither food nor shelter. They had to keep to the Hedal woods road, which was not much more than a shallow ditch; and after it got dark, they lost track of that, too. Nor could they find the bird-catcher's hut, and before they knew it they were lost in the dense Bjolstad forest.

When the boys saw they could not go on, they lopped off some spruce branches, started a fire, and built themselves a hut of the boughs, for they



Drawing by Erik Werenskiöld

The trolls had only one eye amongst them, which
they took turns in using

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had taken along their hatchet, and then they pulled up moss and heather to make a couch. Soon after they had laid down to sleep they heard a great sniffing and snorting. At that the boys listened breathlessly, wondering if it were an animal or a wood-troll. Suddenly came a frightful, big snort—and they heard:

“I smell Christian blood here.”

Next, some one trod so hard that the ground shook, and the boys knew the trolls were up and about.

“Heaven protect us, what are we going to do?” said the younger boy to his brother.

“Well, you’ll have to stay under this pine tree, where you are, and be ready to grab the bags and run for all your life when you see them coming. I’ll take the hatchet,” said the big boy.

He had hardly finished speaking when the trolls were upon them, so big and tall that their heads reached to the top of the pine trees. There were three of them, but they had only one eye amongst them, which they took turns in using, clapping it into a hole in their foreheads and then steering with one hand. The one with the eye led the way, and the others followed, holding onto him.

“Grab hold of the bags,” said the elder, “but don’t go too far before you see what happens.

The Boys Who Met the Trolls

The eye is so high up, they can't see me when I'm behind them."

Well, little brother raced ahead, and the trolls followed close at his heels. The elder, who ran behind, hacked the hindmost troll so hard on his ankle that he gave a horrible yell which scared the first troll so that he jumped and dropped the eye. In an instant, the elder boy had grabbed it. It was as big as a platter and so crystal clear that coal black night turned to bright day when you looked through it.

When the trolls discovered that the eye was gone, and one of them was hurt, they began to utter terrible threats of what would happen if they did not get the eye back at once.

"I'm not scared by trolls nor threats," said the boy; "I alone have three eyes, and you three have none, and, besides that, two of you will have to carry the third one."

"If you don't give us back our eye this very minute we'll change you into a stone," shrieked the trolls.

But the boy did not think there was any hurry; neither boasting nor witchcraft scared him, he said. If they did not leave him in peace, he would chop all three of them, so they would have to crawl along the hill like bugs and beetles.

When the trolls heard this, they were frightened

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and began to sing a different tune. They begged the boy quite meekly to give back the eye, and he should have all the gold and silver and everything else he wanted.

The boy thought that was pretty fair, but he wanted the gold and silver first, so he said that if one of them would go home and bring enough gold and silver to fill his bag and his brother's, and give them two good steel bows into the bargain, he would return the eye, but until then he would hold on to it.

The trolls made a great row and asked how he expected them to go home without the eye to see with. But the boy said they would have to agree to his terms, so at last one of them began shrieking for the old woman, for they had one between them, like the eye. After a while there was an answer from a mountain top far to the north. This was the old woman. The trolls told her to come with two steel bows and two buckets full of gold and silver, and you can be sure it did not take her long to get there.

When she heard what had happened, she, too, began to threaten to bewitch them. But the trolls were still afraid and told her to look out for the little wasp, for she could not be sure that he would not take her eye, too. So she threw them the buckets of gold and silver and the bows, and she

The Boys Who Met the Trolls

and the trolls hurried back to the mountain top, and that was the last any one heard of trolls wandering about in the Hedal woods, smelling for Christian blood.

Stupid Fellows with Jades for Wives

ONCE upon a time two women were quarreling, as sometimes happens, and because they had nothing else to quarrel about, they began disputing as to who had the stupidest husband.

The longer they quarreled, the angrier they grew, till at last they almost flew at each other, for you know "it is easier to start than to end a fight." One of them said she could make her husband believe anything, for he was as gullible as a goblin, and the other one said she could make her husband do anything—no matter how foolish—if she only said it was all right, for he was so stupid he did not know enough to come in when it rained.

"Well, let's see which of us can fool her husband most, then we'll know which is the stupidest," they said, and to this they agreed.

When one of the husbands came home from the woods, the old woman said to him: "May the Lord have mercy on you! How dreadfully sick you look! Perhaps you are going to die."

"There's nothing the matter with me except that I'm hungry and thirsty," said the man.

"Oh, my goodness, no!" gasped the woman. "You're getting worse and worse. You look like

Stupid Fellows with Jades for Wives

a corpse. You must go right to bed. This can't last long!"

She kept this up until she had made the man believe he was at death's door. She made him lie down and fold his hands and close his eyes, and then she laid him out like a corpse and put him in a coffin. She had bored some holes in the top so that he might breathe easily and even peep out.

The other woman took a couple of spools and made believe she was winding on them, although she had no wool. Her husband came in and watched the tomfoolery for a while.

"A spinning-wheel without a wheel is of no use," said the man, "but a woman is a fool who winds without wool."

"Without wool?" said the woman. "Why, I've got yarn. You don't see it because it's of the very finest wool."

When she had finished her pretense of winding yarn, she took the spinning-wheel and began to spin.

"I declare you've gone clean crazy," said the man. "You are spoiling your spinning-wheel by making it hum with no yarn on it."

"No yarn on it?" said the woman. "Why, the thread is so fine, it needs sharper eyes than yours to see it."

When she had finished spinning, she spooled the

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yarn, set up the frame, laid the warp, threw the shuttle, and wove the cloth. Then she took it out of the loom, milled it, and cut out and made a suit of clothes for her husband, which she then hung in the store-house attic. The poor husband could see neither cloth nor clothes, but as his wife had now made him believe they were of too fine a texture to be seen, he said:

"Well, well, I guess it's all just as you say."

There came a day when the woman said to him:

"The man who owned the next farm has died and is to be buried to-day. You must put on your new clothes and go to his wake."

"All right," he said. "I'll go to his wake."

So she made believe to help him on with his clothes, for she said they were of such fine stuff, he would tear them if no one helped him.

When he got to the wake, he found they had all been drowning their grief in strong liquor, and you may be sure there was no grief felt when they saw him in his new Sunday clothes. But when they started off for the cemetery, and the corpse looked out through the peep-holes, he gave a loud laugh.

"I'll burst if I don't laugh," he said, "for I'll be hanged if there isn't my next-door neighbor, Ole, coming stark naked from my wake."

When the mourners heard this, it didn't take

Stupid Fellows with Jades for Wives

them long to open the lid of the coffin. The fellow who had the new Sunday clothes on asked how it happened that one who lay in his coffin and had had a wake, jabbered and laughed.

"He ought rather to cry!" he said.

"You can't raise the dead with tears," said the other one. It finally came out, as they chattered, that the women were at the bottom of it all, so the men went home and did the very best thing they had ever done, and if any one wants to know what they did, he'll have to ask the birch tree.

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